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THE STRUGGLE FOR THE HOLY LAND

The timing was perfect. When the first Crusaders, with the Pope's blessing, set out for the Holy Land in 1096, the Muslim world was riven by internal strife and the European knights could march east unhindered. Victory followed victory, and in 1099 the Christians took Jerusalem. In a bloodlust, they went house-to-house slaughtering Muslim men, women and children. The Muslim world was stunned, and the caliphs nurtured a smouldering desire for revenge. But the Crusaders

took a firm grip on power in the Holy Land, fortifying it with a network of impregnable fortresses. Only 100 years later were the caliphs united under a single, strong commander. Saladin demonstrated superiority in desert warfare at the Battle of the Horns of Hattin and captured Jerusalem in 1187. For the next century, the fighting ebbed and flowed, but when Ottoman forces captured Constantinople in 1453, the Byzantine Empire and Christian ascendancy in the east were over.

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THE CRUSADES

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1095 // Pope Urban II's speech



1098 // Antioch is taken



1119 // Order of the Knights Templar is founded



1157 // Dissolution of Baghdad Caliphate

The first Crusades

URBAN II CALLS FOR WAR

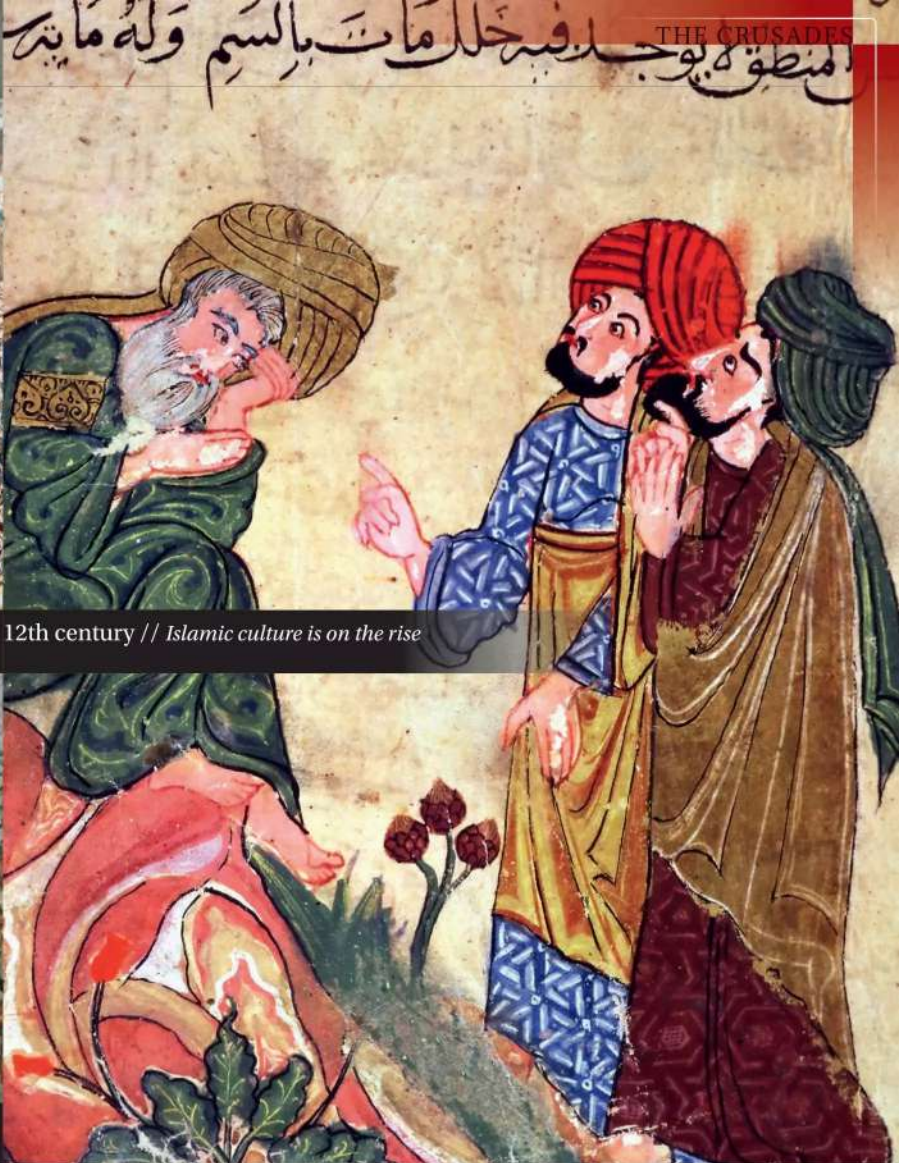
1095 On 27th November, Pope Urban II sets in motion a chain reaction that will change Europe and the Middle East for hundreds of years to come. In a speech to a crowd in the French town of Clermont, he recounts the brutal attacks on Christians in Byzantium in the East and calls for war against the Muslims. The crowd responds with cheers. Urban says that the Crusaders must protect their fellow Christians and Christianity itself. The Pope promises absolution to all who submit to the cross. He argues that it is both a just war and a holy work pleasing to God. Within a year, 60,000–100,000 men-at-arms are ready for battle.

JERUSALEM IS CAPTURED

1099 A month later, spurred on by the Pope's speech, thousands of peasants set out for Constantinople and Jerusalem. The People's Crusade is fuelled by religious mania; it is crushed by the Turks in August 1096. That same month, five crusading armies in Europe set off for Jerusalem. Over the next three years, this official Crusade loses thousands of men to starvation, disease and battle. Nevertheless, 20,000 men take the holy city of Antioch in 1098. In June 1099, the Crusaders reach Jerusalem, where they are attacked with arrows and hot pitch. They enter the city and kill with abandon. Even Muslims seeking refuge in the Al-Aqsa Mosque are brutally murdered.



1099 // The first Crusaders conquer Jerusalem



12th century // Islamic culture is on the rise



1171 // The Fatimid Caliphate falls

KNIGHTLY ORDERS

1119 Nine knights vow to live in poverty, chastity and obedience, and to protect pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem.

Led by Hugues de Payens, the Templars combine active warfare with a monastic life – they wield the sword for Christ and fight evil. New recruits arrive and the knights gain a reputation for brutality; Saladin beheads them as soon as they are caught. Other knightly orders, such as the Knights of St John and the Teutonic Order, also become militarised during the twelfth century. The knights man the strategically important fortresses of the Holy Land. They are well trained, prepared for battle and always ready for martyrdom.

DISSOLUTION OF CALIPHATE

1157 Rumours of the brutality of the Crusaders rapidly spread through the Muslim world, which is in disarray. In 1157, the Caliph of Baghdad, the traditional head of Islam and a Sunni Muslim, loses power to the Shia counter-caliph of Cairo. The Seljuks – a Central Asian Muslim tribe – conquer lands from Afghanistan to the Mediterranean, including Baghdad. Despite Islam's ban on alcohol, they commit drunken abuses across the city. The Caliph of Baghdad retires to his palace, while real political power is scattered among various rulers. Without a strong, unified defence, one Muslim territory after another falls to the Crusaders.



1187 // Muslim commander Saladin conquers Jerusalem



1202 // Fourth Crusade owes a great debt to Venice



1212 // Children's Crusade heads for Jerusalem



13th century // Strategic castles support Crusaders

Battle of giants

MIGHTY CASTLES

1142 The Crusaders are successful. They rule four states in the Middle East: the county of Edessa, the principality of Antioch, the county of Tripoli and the kingdom of Jerusalem. In 1142, the Order of St John takes over Tripoli's main castle, Krak des Chevaliers, which is twice the size of France's largest castle. To strengthen their position, the Crusaders build a vast network of fortresses as far inland as possible. From there, they defend their territories and keep an eye on Muslim armies and trade caravans. The castles are greatly expanded and reinforced – investment continues throughout the thirteenth century.

WAR BETWEEN GIANTS

1187 For nearly 100 years, the Muslims have lacked a strong military leader, but in July, the experienced Muslim commander Saladin assembles 45,000 men. They are victorious at the Horns of Hattin, capture the Holy Cross and behead 230 prisoners. In October, Saladin rides into Jerusalem but spares its Christians. The Pope calls for the Third Crusade, and Richard the Lionheart captures the port city of Acre four years later and executes 3,000 Muslim prisoners. The two giants never meet in battle, as Richard realises that war against Saladin won't lead to the capture of Jerusalem. Instead, they agree a three-year truce in September 1192.



1204 // Crusaders kill Emperor Alexios of Byzantium



1202-1204 // Crusaders capture Constantinople



1229 // Emperor Frederick II regains Jerusalem



THE RICHES OF VENICE

1202 The northern Italian cities of Venice, Genoa and Pisa make a lot of money from the Crusades and trade between the East and West. When Pope Innocent III calls for a Crusade to retake Jerusalem in 1202, he asks Venice for help. The Venetians do their utmost to get ships and supplies ready on time, but only a third of the Crusaders turn up, and so they don't have enough money to pay Venice, to which they are now heavily indebted. Despite the Pope's warnings, the Crusaders attack the Christian city of Zadar in 1202, but without success. In 1204, they sack Christian Constantinople and finally repay the debt to Venice in silver and land.

CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

1212 In June, a young French shepherd called Stephen travels from his home town of Vendôme to Paris to deliver a letter from a passing pilgrim to King Philip II. Stephen believes the pilgrim is Christ and the letter a message from heaven. Although Pope Innocent III never officially launches the Children's Crusade, up to 30,000 people join Stephen – children and young people, as well as the poor and elderly. The Crusade breaks up in Paris, but in August 7,000 young people from Cologne reach Genoa. They hope the Lord will let them cross the sea to Jerusalem. When this does not happen, some go to Rome to meet the Pope, while others are captured and sold into slavery.



1244 // Muslims drive Jews out of Jerusalem

13th century // Church expands its power base



1291 // Acre, Sidon and Beirut are conquered by the Muslims



1291 // Crusaders finally lose the Holy Land

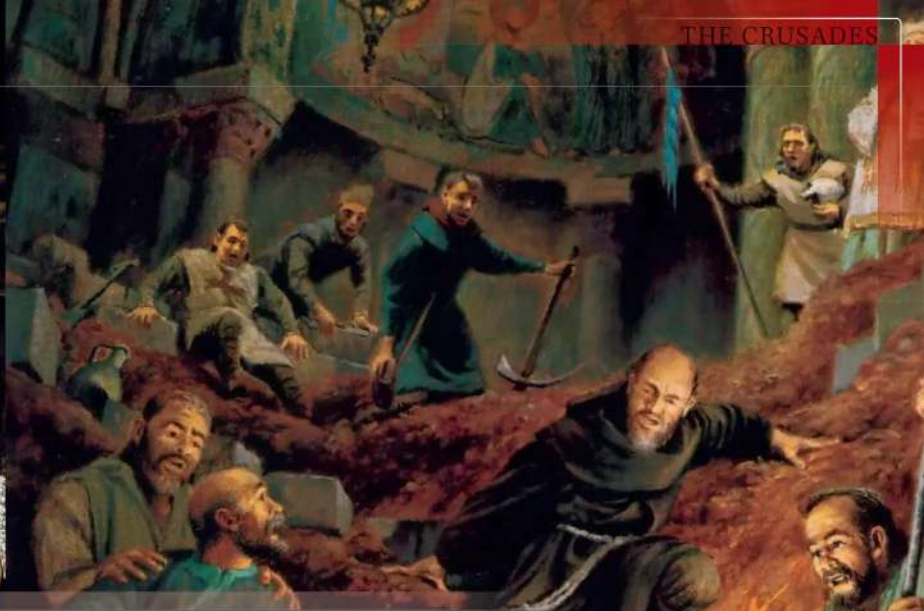
The Holy Land

JERUSALEM'S FATE

1244 In 1228, Europe's mighty Emperor Frederick II is excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX, but still travels to Jerusalem at the head of a Crusade. The following year, Frederick II and Saladin's nephew Al-Kamil sign a ten-year peace treaty. The Christians get Jerusalem, Bethlehem and a corridor to the coast. The Muslims keep Temple Mount and the two great mosques. It's a victory. Jerusalem is won through diplomacy, but Frederick II is a heretic in the Pope's eyes. The truce creates so much infighting in Jerusalem that in 1244 the nomadic Muslim army of the Khwarazmians is able to conquer the city and slaughter its inhabitants.

POWER OF THE CHURCH

1201-1300 The thirteenth century is also known as the century of persecution, when powerful popes call for war against Muslims, Jews and heretics. The recurring Crusades strengthen the power of the Pope in Rome. The Crusades are also very political, and several popes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries fight for the spiritual sphere to take precedence over the secular, and for the Church to rule over princes. Only the Church has the power to coordinate the great Crusades, and only the Pope can bless the wars, which offer absolution to large populations.

1250 // *Louis the Saint*1268 // *City of the Holy Lance, Antioch, falls*14th-15th century // *Ottoman Empire founded*

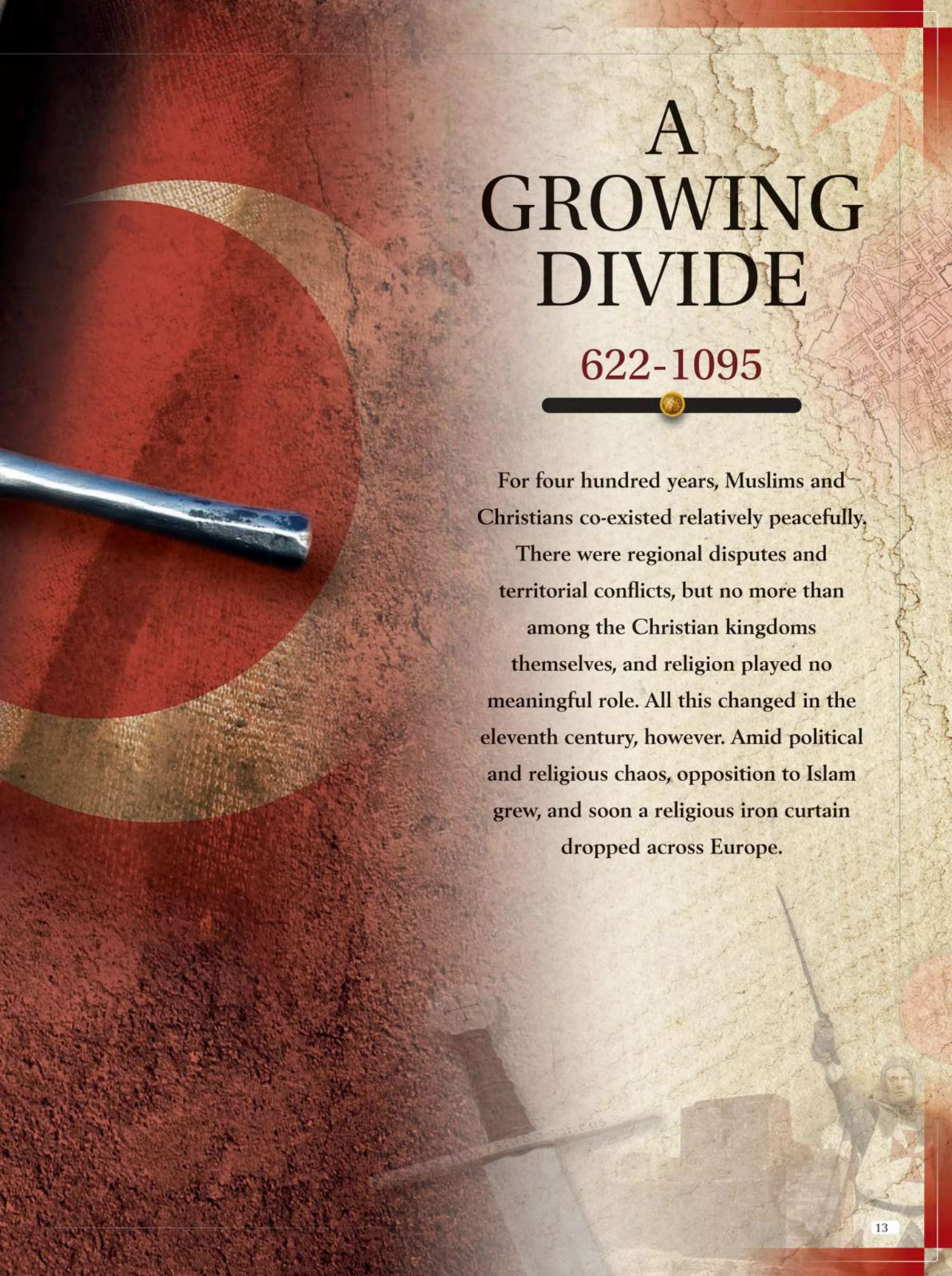
ANTIOCH AND ACRE FALL

1268 On 15th May, Sultan Baibars's forces lay siege to the Christian trading city of Antioch, which falls three days later. The Muslims then raze one Christian town after another and kill the population to demoralise the Crusaders. The possibility of another victorious Crusade in the Holy Land is further weakened when the knightly orders make a separate peace with Baibars – they promise to warn the sultan two months before any Crusade. The final battle comes in May 1291, when Egypt's Sultan Al-Ashraf Khalil captures the port city of Acre after two months of bloody siege. This ends 193 years of Christian rule in the Holy Land.

END OF THE CRUSADES

1300 Although the Holy Land is finally lost, the Pope proclaims 1300 a year of rejoicing, with extra indulgences and mercy for the people. Yet French inquisitors fear that the Templars have been influenced by Islam, which is considered a terrible pestilence in Europe. In 1307, the French King Philip IV arrests all the Templars in France and accuses them of heresy. Fifty-four Templars are burned at the stake and in 1312 the Pope dissolves the order. Meanwhile, the Ottomans invade Europe and reach Hungary's borders in 1389. A new Crusader army meets them, but is massacred in 1396 at Nicopolis, and in 1453 the Ottomans finally conquer Constantinople.





A GROWING DIVIDE

622-1095

For four hundred years, Muslims and Christians co-existed relatively peacefully.

There were regional disputes and territorial conflicts, but no more than among the Christian kingdoms themselves, and religion played no meaningful role. All this changed in the eleventh century, however. Amid political and religious chaos, opposition to Islam grew, and soon a religious iron curtain dropped across Europe.

622-1095

AD 622

The Prophet Muhammad founds Islam.

732 The

Battle of Tours halts Muslim expansion.

1071 The

Byzantine Empire loses the Battle of Manzikert.

1075 The *Dictatus Papae* establishes papal supremacy over kings.

1086 The emirs of Muslim Spain ask for help against the Christian invaders.

1095 Pope Urban II calls for the First Crusade.

622 >>> 732 >>> 1071 >>> 1075 >>> 1086 >>> 1095 >>>

One August day in 1099, a large crowd of refugees snaked through the streets of Baghdad and into the palace of Caliph Al-Mustazhir Billah. With trembling voices, they recounted the terrifying experiences they'd been subject to during the Christian conquest of the Holy Land. Some had witnessed the massacre of Jerusalem's inhabitants when the Christians razed the city a month earlier. They described how their family and friends had been hunted down and eventually slaughtered by the Europeans. Together they urged the caliph to drive out the invaders, and swore revenge on the infidels who had taken their land, desecrated their shrines and killed their loved ones.

MUSLIMS INVADED EUROPE

The Crusade and the attack on Jerusalem were the culmination of tensions that had grown over four to five centuries between Christian Europe and the Muslim world to its south and east. In the centuries leading up to the turn of the millennium, Christian European politics had become increasingly chaotic. As religious strife within Christianity deepened, its leaders began to rail against Islam, highlighting the conflict between the religions. Within a few decades, inter-faith relations deteriorated, and a religious iron curtain slowly but surely descended between the two civilisations.

On the one side was Christian Europe, led by the Pope. He was supported by a large number of kingdoms, of which the Holy Roman Empire was by far the

strongest. On the other side was the Muslim Caliphate, made up of Asian, Arab and African dynasties. Although they fought among themselves for power, Islam was their common bond.

From a religious point of view, the growing conflict between Muslims and Christians was not inevitable. On the contrary, the two religions shared many core beliefs. Both Christians and Muslims regarded the Bible as holy scripture. Both Christianity and Islam preached tolerance, and both religions stressed the need to fight evil in oneself rather than in others.

From 1085 to 1095, some 3,000 Christian pilgrims were persecuted in Jerusalem, and a number of churches were destroyed or used as stables.

The political and military reality, however, was quite different. According to the Quran, Islam was founded when the merchant Muhammad of Mecca received a series of revelations from God between 610

and 632. He was taught the nature of God and given a set of rules. Most important was the command to worship only one god, Allah.

With a band of faithful followers, Muhammad made his way to the desert city of Medina, where he founded the first community based on Islam. To safeguard his fledgling faith, Muhammad subdued the entire Arabian Peninsula militarily, uniting its

>>>>

0 300 km



Christian countries



Caliphate



Battle between Christians and Muslims

MORTGAGED DUCHY

■ When Robert of Normandy set out on Crusade to the Holy Land, he lent his duchy to his brother, William II of England, for 10,000 marks.

SUPPLIER OF KNIGHTS

■ The French counties of Blois, Boulogne, Le Puy-en-Velay, Flanders and Vermandois provided most of the knights who took part in the First Crusade.

NORMANDY

KINGDOM OF FRANCE

BATTLE OF TOURS, 732

■ The Umayyad Caliphate had conquered territories as far north as Gaul in southern France in the eighth century, when they were defeated by French forces near Tours. The defeat finally halted Muslim expansion in Europe.

THE SPANISH KINGDOMS

RESISTED ISLAM

■ The later Christian kingdoms of León, Castile, Navarre, Aragon and Catalonia came under Muslim rule in the early eighth century. León became the first area to return to Christian control when it was reconquered in 742.

AL-ANDALUS

SPAIN WAS RENAMED

■ Under the Umayyads, the caliphate expanded quickly, and during the seventh and eighth centuries they conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula, which then went by the Arabic name Al-Andalus.

TECHNOLOGY.....

CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

DAILY LIFE.....



Muslims and Christians at peace

With the arrival of the Arabs, Islam became the dominant religion in Spain. Jews and Christians were allowed to practise their religion and participate in society on an almost equal footing, on payment of a special tax. However, they were not allowed to bear

arms or testify in court. Compared with the conditions faced by many subjugated peoples of the time, the non-Muslim population was relatively free, and both Jews and Christians took part in the flourishing cultural life that characterised Muslim Spain.

ALMORAVID DYNASTY

RADICAL MUSLIMS

■ The Islamic Almoravid-Berber dynasty emerged in 1061 and aggressively spread its strict interpretation of Islam from its North African base. In 1086 it was called to Al-Andalus, where it strengthened resistance to the Christians in the north.

The Caliphate's expansion led to an inevitable clash with Christian kingdoms.

RELIGIOUS IRON CURTAIN DIVIDED THE WORLD



In the years leading up to the Crusades, the divide between Christian territories and the Muslim Caliphate became increasingly pronounced. Frictions and disputes, particularly in Spain and the Byzantine Empire, eventually led the Pope to call for war.

LITHUANIA

COUNTY OF POMERANIA

RULED BY DUKES

■ In 1025 Poland was recognised as a Christian kingdom by the Pope. For most of its early history, however, it was a duchy, ruled by dukes rather than kings.

THE BASTION

■ The Holy Roman Emperor was one of the most powerful men in the secular world. The empire was a Christian stronghold that stretched across Germany, Benelux, the Czech Republic, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland and Austria.

KINGDOM OF POLAND

BUFFER STATE

■ Hungary formed the eastern frontier of Christianity. It assimilated invading nomadic tribes and turned them into loyal troops. Moreover, the Crusaders' route passed through Hungary on their way to the Holy Land.

KINGDOM OF HUNGARY

HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

KINGDOM OF CROATIA

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

ASKED POPE FOR HELP

■ After the Seljuk Turks captured large parts of Byzantine territory at the Battle of Manzikert, Emperor Alexios had to ask for help from his fellow Christians in Europe. The appeal led to the First Crusade.

BATTLE OF MANZIKERT, 1071

■ The Byzantine Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes attempted to gain control of the buffer state of Armenia with a large army. But he was let down by his allies, and at the Battle of Manzikert the Muslim Seljuks wiped out the Byzantine army. The defeat cost the Byzantines Anatolia and was close to breaking the empire as the caliphate now stretched to the Bosphorus Strait.

CAME FROM IRAN

■ The Seljuks originally came from the Aral Sea region of Central Asia, but during the 11th century their empire spread westwards. It was the first Turkic dynasty within Islam, and in the centuries that followed the Seljuks would become the dominant power in Western Asia.

SELJUK EMPIRE



THE BATTLE OF TOURS: the defeat of the Muslims in the heart of France in AD 732 has different names, depending on which sources you use. The Muslims called it the Battle of Poitiers, while in the Christian world it became known as the Battle of Tours. Either way, the defeat halted the expansion of the Umayyad Caliphate and forced the Muslims back into Spain.

The third caliph, Uthman ibn Affan, compiled and edited the Quran. It summarises the revelations given to the Prophet Muhammad by God.



next century led an impressive series of conquests. Like a sandstorm, Muslim forces swept across the cities of Syria and the Holy Land. In 635, just three

years after Muhammad's death, Damascus fell, and in 636 the Muslims conquered the first Christian city, Antioch. In 638, after a fierce siege lasting a year, Jerusalem itself, the Holy City of the Jews and Christians, had to surrender to the Muslim invasion force. Soon the caliph's power extended from the Chinese border in the east across central Asia, the Middle East and North

Africa to Sicily and the Iberian Peninsula in the west.

But the expansion drive didn't stop there. In 711, Muslim forces pushed right into the heart of Europe to central France. Only when they were almost at the gates of the church of Saint-Martins Basilica in the city of Tours in 732 were they halted by French and Burgundian forces.

The caliphate was huge by then, covering more than 13 million square kilometres. However, after the defeat at Tours, the Muslims abandoned their hold on their French possessions and the border between Christian Europe and the Muslim Caliphate came to lie in northern Spain.

Here in Al-Andalus, as the Arabs named the region, Muslim rule was strong. The ruling dynasty showed great tolerance towards the area's Christians and Jews. Art and culture flourished in what later became known as the Muslim Golden Age.

EUROPE WAS IN CHAOS

The situation was different in Christian Europe. To the north, Christianity and the Church were under pressure – not from Islam, but from within. The two centuries leading up to the turn of the millennium had been marked by chaos. The Frankish Empire, once Europe's dominant power, had enjoyed a revival under Charlemagne around 800, but had subsequently been split by a succession dispute. At the same time, Viking invasions along the rivers left deep fissures, and by 1000 France had been divided into principalities. Only by the skin of their teeth did successive kings manage

>> small, scattered communities into one state. There is no indication that he intended to extend his political influence further – Islam was to be the religion of the Arabs, Muhammad believed.

But his immediate successors, the caliphs, saw things differently, and over the



THE BATTLE OF MANZIKERT: the defeat of the Byzantine Empire in 1071 triggered a prolonged political crisis that saw Turkic nomads settle throughout Anatolia. The ethnic and religious changes eventually led to the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey.



ABU BAKR: The leader of the Almoravid dynasty was credited with spreading Islam to sub-Saharan Africa. He died in 1087 while attempting to suppress a rebellion in Ghana.

to hold together the territory surrounding Paris. The rest of France was lawless. Conflict, pillage and violence were the order of the day.

Decline and division took a heavy toll on the Church and the Pope, whose authority had been increasingly undermined by power-hungry kings and princes over the previous centuries. In principle, ecclesiastical and secular government were separate. The Pope was the supreme authority over ecclesiastical matters, while the king was responsible for earthly affairs.

In reality, things were quite different. Local priests formed unholy alliances with cruel and brutal princes to grab land, offices and riches. Gradually, it became common for churchmen to buy themselves high offices from the ruling prince. The priests did what suited them – including getting married – while the Pope was reduced from being God's representative on earth to a figurehead with no real power or influence.

KING WAS EXCOMMUNICATED

This could not continue, Pope Gregory VII thought, and decided to correct both the impiety of the priests and his own wavering authority. In 1056, the Pope convened an ecclesiastical council, where it was decided that secular leaders should henceforth have no say in his election. Instead, the Pope would be chosen by a college of cardinals – an arrangement that remains in place to this day. Later, Gregory went a step further.

"The Roman church was founded by God alone," he and his followers boldly declared in the decree *Dictatus Papae* (The

Dictate of the Pope) in 1075. It also stated that "the Roman church has never erred; nor will it err to all eternity, the Scripture bearing witness". The dispute between the Church and the secular princes flared up in earnest when Henry IV, King of Germany and thus head of Europe's superpower, the Holy Roman Empire, retaliated sharply against the Pope's decree.

In a letter, he addressed Gregory using the name he'd had before becoming Pope: "Hildebrand, at present not pope but false monk", wrote Henry, thus defying the head of the Church. Gregory retaliated by excommunicating Henry. For Henry, this was a serious situation. As a Christian king, he could not stand outside the Church, and besides, he needed the Pope's backing.

Threatened by disgruntled subjects, Henry admitted defeat in 1077, realising

there was no way out but to repent. Like another pilgrim, he walked with his retinue across the Alps in the biting January cold to meet the Pope. Gregory feared Henry was launching an attack and took refuge in a castle near Canossa in northern Italy.

But the Pope's concerns were unfounded, as Henry was in no way a vengeful warrior. Barefoot and wearing only a robe, the king stood in the cold snow, knocking despairingly at the castle gate. Only after three days was it opened. The once haughty king fell to his knees and begged forgiveness. Gregory was convinced that Henry was sincerely repentant and absolved him. That same evening, they went to the altar together as a symbol that the German king was once again a member of the Church.

The dispute between king and the Pope was far from over, however. Shortly after

TECHNOLOGY.....

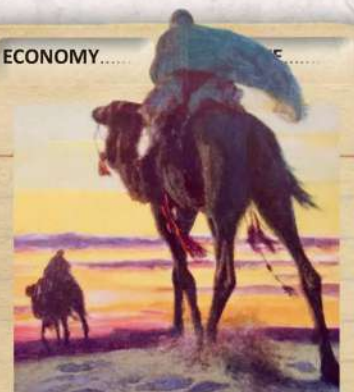
CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

Muhammad founded Islam

In 622, the Prophet Muhammad left Mecca and settled in the city of Medina. There he created a society based on the revelations he received from God. Muslim precepts, such as the call to prayer from the mosque roof, originated

here. When Muhammad died in 632, the caliphs took over his duties as head of the Muslim community, but they could not receive prophecies. That is why, according to Islam, Muhammad is the last prophet.



“Wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves”

>>> Henry IV's penance, he and the Pope went at each other again, and the rivalry between religious and secular powers continued unabated. But the battle also had a positive effect, as people talked more than ever before about faith and religion, and what God and the Church really meant to them. This increased interest in Christianity led more and more people to worry about the fate of Jerusalem.

JERUSALEM: THE WORLD'S CENTRE

The city had an almost magical attraction for Christians. Here Christ had died and risen to eternal life, and many returned from pilgrimages to Jerusalem with stones or sand from the Holy Land to keep a little of the divine with them. In the early 11th century, Christians feared the city would be closed to pilgrims and the holy sites lost.

Their fear was not without cause. Under Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah – later known as the “Mad Caliph” – pilgrims were harassed in the most brutal way, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, located on the spot where Christians believed Christ had been executed, was destroyed. A few years later, Hakim disappeared without a trace on one of his evening walks. Only his donkey and bloody clothes were found. The new caliph admitted that the exclusion of pilgrims had been a mistake, since they provided a large part of Jerusalem's income. The gates were reopened, and in return for a hefty payment to the Arabs,

the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was rebuilt.

In Spain, too, the conflict between Islam and

Christianity smouldered. The Christian states north of Al-Andalus had gradually become larger and more self-assertive. The Catholic territories of Castile and León, in particular, had become powers whose military prowess and clout the Muslims had to take seriously.

The Muslim emirs tried to ally themselves with the Christian princes, but instead the Catholics made forays into Muslim territory, which turned into full-scale invasions, and by 1086 the threat was so great that the emirs of southern Al-Andalus had to call for help.

Unfortunately for all parties, assistance came from the fanatical North African Almoravid dynasty, which tolerated no deviation from the strictest interpretation of Islam. The new rulers imprisoned the emirs and burned books with non-Muslim content. The French king, horrified by the Almoravids' aggressive attempts to spread Islam, asked his subjects to come to the aid of their Christian brothers to the south.

CHRISTIANITY UNDER PRESSURE

A few companies, led by noblemen, left for the Pyrenees, but that was all. The Pope showed no interest in coming to the aid of his fellow believers in Spain. That would soon change, however, when the Byzantine Empire also reported trouble. It had established itself as Europe's richest and strongest military power over recent centuries. But by the early 11th century, the Byzantine Empire was a victim of its own success. The imperial court and magnates spent lavishly on pomp and circumstance, while the army and navy were left to decay.

In 1071, the empire paid a heavy price for its complacency, suffering a heavy defeat in

a clash with the Turkic ruling dynasty, the Seljuks, at the Battle of Manzikert in Armenia. Turkic Seljuk nomads were then free to settle throughout Anatolia, placing huge pressure on the Byzantine Empire. Problems mounted and the once-powerful Emperor Alexios I Komnenos was forced to ask the Pope for help against the Islamic threat, which was edging ever-closer to the European continent's eastern flanks.

The letter with Alexios' prayer landed on the table of the new Pope Urban II in March 1095. He had been a staunch supporter and ally of Gregory VII and was as keen to reform the Church and strengthen the papacy as his predecessor. When the cry of distress from Emperor Alexios came, however, Urban was fully occupied with a church meeting, and he replied somewhat tersely that he would urge “many to promise, by taking an oath, to aid the emperor most faithfully as far as they were able against the pagans”.

Urban II did not seem very interested in responding to Alexios' pleas at first. But over the summer, an idea took shape in the Pope's head – a plan that would advance his position, strengthen the piety of his people and foster friendship with the Byzantine Empire.

In a field near Clermont in France, the birthplace of the Pope, Urban II spoke to a large crowd on 27 November. He explained how Muslim forces had attacked the Christian city of Constantinople, and now urged the people to come to the emperor's aid and then rid Jerusalem of the infidels.

“They have either destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of their own religion. They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness. They circumcise the Christians, and the blood of the circumcision they either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font... On whom, therefore, does the task lie of avenging this, of redeeming this situation, if not on you... Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves.”

With the Pope's words, the relationship between Christianity and Islam was changed forever. ■

13 million km² was the size of the Muslim Caliphate at its largest. Today, only Russia exceeds it in size geographically.

POPE URBAN II. 1035-1099

FATHER OF THE CRUSADE

■ Urban II was born in France in 1035 and was educated at the cathedral of Reims. He later joined the famous monastery of Cluny, where he achieved the title of Grand Prior before being appointed Pope in 1088. He supported predecessor Gregory VII's reforms, which were intended to strengthen the Church in its struggle against Europe's kings. In 1095 Urban II met an ambassador from the Byzantine

emperor who asked for help in the fight against the Muslim Seljuks who had conquered large parts of the Byzantine Empire. Later that year, at a Church meeting in Clermont, Urban II proclaimed that Christians should go on crusade and wrest power over the Holy Land from the Muslims. The Pope died shortly before news of the Crusaders' conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 reached Rome.

Pope – Elevated above secular leaders – Called for a crusade

In 1095, Urban II called for a crusade at Clermont in France. The Crusaders went on to wrest the Holy Land from the Muslims.







THE FIRST CRUSADE

1096-1099

Whether driven by their faith in God, hope for eternal life, a sense of adventure or simple boredom, Europeans flocked to the banner of the cross. Many would never return home, but die in battle or from disease, hunger or exhaustion. For those exposed to the Crusaders' rampages, the outlook was even worse. The supposedly pious trek quickly descended into an orgy of murder, violence and cannibalism.

Nothing was sacred to the Crusaders in their struggle to achieve their main aim: the capture of Jerusalem.

1096-1099

1096 60,000-100,000 men-at-arms have the red cross sewn on to their clothes as they join the ranks.



1097 The Crusaders lay siege to Antioch. It falls after eight months.

1098 The Christians are themselves besieged in Antioch, but a divine discovery helps to overcome the Turks.

1099 Four years after leaving Europe, the Crusaders finally reach Jerusalem.

1096 >>>

1097 >>>

1098 >>>

1099 >>>



When Pope Urban II addressed a crowd in the French city of Clermont on 27th November 1095, he painted a horrific picture of Muslim crimes against Christians: innocents had been tortured and their intestines pulled out while they still lived, women had been raped and babies hurled on to stone floors. The Pope's words shocked the thousands in attendance, and his call to go to war against the Muslims was met with cheers. No sooner had Urban II finished speaking than the first Crusader came forward.

"The bishop of Le Puy, a man of great repute and the highest nobility, went up to the lord pope with a smiling face and on bended knee begged and beseeched his permission and blessing to make the journey," one eyewitness recounted.

The bishop's reaction was less spontaneous than it first appeared. Adhemar of Le Puy was one of Urban's most loyal supporters, and together the two had planned both the Crusade and Adhemar's appearance after the Pope's speech. The next day, Adhemar was appointed spiritual leader of the Crusade, described by Urban as "our dearest son", whose orders the Crusaders were to obey as "though they were our own". At the same time, Raymond IV of Toulouse, Adhemar's closest secular ally and one of Latin Christendom's most powerful princes, enlisted as military leader of this, the First Crusade.

With the appointment of these two heavyweights, the Pope's campaign was off to a good start and was pursued with great energy. Urban embarked on a ten-month

preaching tour of France, detailing Muslim abuses and promising absolution and remission of sins for any who fell in battle for the Holy City of Jerusalem. People from all walks of life flocked to his banner, all solemnly swearing to go on Crusade. The Church then issued cloth crosses, which the Crusaders dutifully sewed on their clothes to show that they had "taken up the cross" and were on their way to Jerusalem.

In some areas, the influx was so great that the Pope feared the Crusade would threaten society and leave localities devoid of numbers. His admonitions that the parishioners should not leave until they had secured their wives' agreement had little effect. Europe was burning with Crusade fever, and the Pope's original appeal was answered to an extent that shocked him. A year after he called for battle against the Muslims, between 60,000 and 100,000 men-at-arms had signed up under the cross.

Four crusading armies left Europe in 1096 and gathered in Constantinople before sailing to Asia Minor in the first half of 1097.

FEAR DROVE LOCALS TO ENLIST

Nor could the Pope's call for a Crusade have come at a better time. Generations of Europeans had lived through war, chaos and strife. In recent decades, France had even been plagued by drought and famine. Just as the Pope was beginning his sermon, an epidemic had broken out: ergotism – a disease caused by eating rye infected with a particular fungus. Toes, fingers, arms and legs turned black with gangrene and withered away. If left untreated, ergotism led to a painful death. In addition to the terrible symptoms, the "holy fire", as it was popularly called, was considered to be God's punishment for the sick person's misdeeds,

The Crusaders did not receive the reception they had hoped for when they arrived in Constantinople in the autumn of 1096. Instead of being greeted as heroes as they'd expected, the huge army was met with fear and dismay.



and the epidemic terrified the population, making them aware of their sins.

The fear of sin and its consequences was therefore omnipresent for Europeans in the eleventh century. Images of black devils and the flames of Hell filled church walls and people's imaginations. They therefore took great pains to avoid ending up where "the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched", as the Bible so vividly described it.

Usually, those with the means tried to counter the horrors with generous donations to churches and monasteries or through pilgrimages. The First Crusade gave war-torn, starving and sin-conscious Europeans a new opportunity: by going on a Crusade to the Holy Land, supposedly flowing with milk and honey, they could atone for their sins and plunder both wealth and territory, all with the Pope's blessing.

A COLD CONSTANTINOPLE WELCOME

In August 1096, the Crusaders began to move slowly through Europe. As a precaution, Raymond of Toulouse donated a large sum of money to the cathedral at Le Puy "for the redemption of my crimes and

TECHNOLOGY.....

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Sin was good business

For medieval folk, hell was an actual physical place to which they were sent on Judgement Day to be tormented for eternity. To avoid such a fate, the Church offered sinners the chance to buy absolution. The idea that donations

could shorten their stay in the fire was accepted and became a major source of income. It wasn't until the twelfth century that 'purgatory' was formulated in detail, but the idea was already playing a role at the time of the Crusades.



those of my parents" before setting off. In return for the donation, the church was to ensure that a candle always burned in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary, so that she could watch over him during his journey.

Raymond and the other Crusaders would need all the protection they could get. The first unpleasant surprise came in Constantinople. Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, who had so earnestly asked for help, did not appear grateful. On the contrary, he reacted with horror and distrust as the throng of European princes, knights, peasants and beggars poured into the city streets. Fearing that the knights would turn against him and destabilise his rule, Alexios demanded the Crusader leaders swear allegiance to him and hand over any land they conquered. In return, the emperor promised that he would later send a relief force to assist the Crusaders in their battles on the road to Jerusalem.

After that, the Crusader army sailed to Anatolia. No sooner had they reached land than they were attacked by a force of mounted archers from the Muslim Seljuk dynasty. It was only through force of sheer numbers and good fortune that the

Crusaders turned their first encounter with the Seljuks into a military victory.

But their relief was short-lived, for during its retreat the Muslim army had adopted a scorched-earth policy, burning all the crops in its wake. By September 1097, when the Crusaders had finally fought their way through the snow-capped Taurus Mountains of modern-day southern Turkey to reach the Mediterranean coast, many had succumbed to hunger and exhaustion. At the same time, they faced the greatest challenge of their journey: the mighty walls of Antioch rose up before them.

ANTIOCH CAPTURED BY CUNNING

The city, sacred to Christians because it had been the first bishopric of St Peter, had been taken by the Muslims in 1085. Its location between the Orontes River to the north and Mount Silphius to the south, together with a 12-kilometre city wall, made Antioch virtually impregnable. Throughout its 1,300-year-plus history, the city had only fallen through trickery.

"This city extends two miles in length and is so protected with walls, towers and defences that it may dread neither the

THE BATTLE FOR ANTIOCH

CUNNING AND A HOLY SPEAR SECURED CITY

In 1097, the Crusaders laid siege to the city of Antioch. Eight months passed before it fell. Then it was the Christians themselves who were besieged, as a large Muslim relief force surrounded and starved the city.

1 Antioch's 12-kilometre-long walls were up to 20 metres high and almost impossible to take, so the Christians had to get help from inside to capture it. The Crusader Bohemond of Taranto persuaded a guard to help 60 Crusaders over the wall, who could then open the gate to the rest of the army.



2 After conquering Antioch, the Crusaders were themselves besieged by the Muslims under Kerbogha. But when things looked bleakest, they found the Holy Spear – which reportedly pierced Christ's side as he hung on the cross.



3 With the Holy Spear as proof of God's allegiance, the Crusaders surprisingly defeated Kerbogha's army. In his chronicle, however, the Crusader Radulf of Caen admitted that the Holy Spear was merely an Arab weapon, but the belief it was real gave the underdog Christians the courage needed to prevail.



EYEWITNESS

RAYMOND OF AGUILERS / Winter 1098

CONQUEST OF MA'ARRA

“It happened, however, to some of our men that when they led the Saracens through the city for spoils, the Saracens conducted them to cisterns, and suddenly hurled themselves into them, choosing death rather than to be willing to reveal their own or other's property. Wherefore, all fell down dead; and they were cast forth among the swamps of the city and outside the walls.”

”

attack of machine nor the assault of man even if all mankind gathered to besiege it,” wrote Raymond's chaplain.

The Christians abandoned a direct attack, and on 20th October 1097 the siege of Antioch began. It lasted throughout the winter, when torrential rains and extreme cold tested the Crusader army, and it was only in June 1098 that the city's supplies started to run out. However, the Crusaders knew that they could not delay an attack much longer, as Antioch's governor, Yaghi-Siyan, had sent for the powerful commander Kerbogha of Mosul, whose relief army could arrive at any moment.

GUARD HELPED THE CRUSADERS

Bohemond of Taranto – an ambitious Norman nobleman – had helped besiege the important Greek port city of Durazzo in 1081 on a military expedition with his father, Robert Guiscard. When, after seven months, the city still hadn't surrendered, his father persuaded one of its inhabitants to betray it, and the city capitulated. Now

Bohemond repeated his father's success. He spied Firuz, the guard at the tower above the St George's Gate on the south wall. According to the Byzantine Emperor's daughter Anna Komnena, Firuz used to “lean over the walls” and chat with Bohemond. More likely, however, Armenian spies brought the messages from Bohemond into Antioch.

Firuz had been caught selling Antioch's scarce food on the black market. Yaghi-Siyan had punished him with a large fine, and now Firuz wanted revenge. At dawn on 3rd June, he stood ready to help a vanguard of some 60 crusaders over the wall. As soon as the small group got inside, they opened the gates and hundreds of Crusaders poured into the emaciated city.

With their battle cry of “God's will! God's will!” the Crusaders went rampaging through the streets of Antioch. Eight months of waiting turned into a frenzy in which no one and nothing was spared.

“The Crusaders killed all whom they met, and at daybreak they cried out in such terrifying screams that the whole city was thrown into confusion and women and children wept,” recounted Crusader Raymond of Aguilers.

“All the streets of the city on every side were full of corpses, so that no one could endure to be there because of the stench, nor could anyone walk along the narrow paths of the city except over the corpses of the dead,” wrote twelfth-century historian Albert of Aachen.

No sooner had the Crusaders rejoiced in their conquest than Kerbogha's

The Crusade's commanders were primarily recruited from the French nobility.

NOBLES HEEDED THE CALL

While Crusaders came from all walks of life, their leaders were recruited from the highest nobility. Some saw the Crusade as part of their duty as a Christian, while others hoped for glory and riches in conquest.



“The Crusaders killed all whom they met,”

relief force arrived. The Christian besiegers now found themselves under siege, and they too had virtually no food. Supplies were largely exhausted, and when they captured Antioch they'd found little except pepper and other spices. Everything else had already been consumed by the inhabitants during the Crusaders' siege. Fighting, hunger and disease had already reduced the Crusader army to around thirty thousand men, and every day its numbers dwindled further as more and more deserted the stricken city. Even Bohemond's son-in-law, William of Grandmesnil, fled.

The next day, 11th June, Bohemond and Bishop Adhemar ordered the city gates closed to prevent more people from leaving. Neither this nor the Muslim army's slow-but-sure stranglehold on the city, however, could stop groups of Crusaders from fleeing the massacre everyone expected would follow.

HOLY SPEAR GAVE HOPE

Despondency hung amid the oppressive heat and stench of corpses throughout the streets of the besieged city. The Crusaders could not believe that after all they'd endured that they would fall to the infidels' sword just a month's march from the Holy City of Jerusalem. One man was convinced it would not be so. French soldier and mystic Peter Bartholomew had received a vision, he confided to Bishop Adhemar. In fact, Bartholomew had seen the vision

several times: two men, St Andrew and Christ himself, had taken him to St Peter's, Antioch's largest and most important church, and told him that a significant relic was buried there. The relic was the Holy Spear (also known as the Holy Lance) – the spear that, according to tradition, a Roman soldier had thrust into the side of Christ as he hung on the cross.

Adhemar was sceptical. Not because he doubted either the vision or the idea of relics – he himself always carried a wooden splinter, supposedly from Christ's cross, on his travels – but because he knew that the

Holy Spear had already been found and was now in the Byzantine Emperor's relic collection in Constantinople. Nevertheless, he reluctantly agreed to let Bartholomew start digging in the church in the place where St Andrew had shown him.

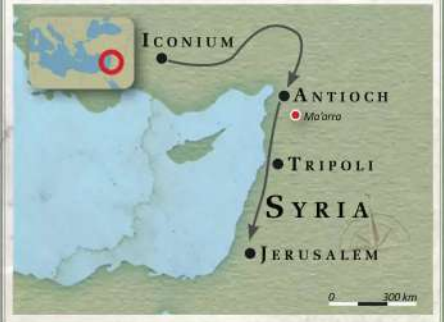
Excavation work began on 14th June 1098. After a day's worth of digging, two separate teams of workers had dropped their shovels through exhaustion without finding anything. It was then that Bartholomew, “seeing the exhaustion of our workers, stripped his outer garments and, clad only in a shirt and barefooted, dropped into the hole”. As the others prayed, Bartholomew dug furiously, and shortly afterwards uncovered a miracle.

“Finally, in His mercy, the lord showed us his Lance and I, Raymond, the author of this book, kissed the point

“All the streets on every side were full of corpses, so that no one could endure to be there because of the stench.”

JOURNEY TOOK THREE YEARS

■ 1096, the Crusade travelled through Hungary and the Byzantine Empire to Asia Minor. In 1098, Antioch fell, followed by Ma'arra in 1099. Lavish gifts led the Crusader army to initially spare Tripoli and head directly to Jerusalem instead.



of the Lance as it barely protruded from the ground,” Raymond of Toulouse wrote later.

What Bartholomew actually found is uncertain, but historians guess that it was probably an Arab spear. In any case, news of the discovery spread quickly around the camp. The Crusaders rejoiced at this sign of God's support in their darkest hour.

HELP CAME FROM ABOVE

Despite their renewed zeal, the Christians did not rush out of the city to attack the Muslims. Instead, they tried to hold out until the promised Byzantine relief force arrived. Although the Crusaders appreciated the miracle and believed in the divine, they put more faith in the Byzantine warriors' fighting skills.

However, they were to wait in vain. Alexios had prioritised exploiting the damage the Crusaders had done to the Seljuks in Anatolia to strengthen his position on the Mediterranean >>>>>



BISHOP ADHEMAR
(?-1098)

The spiritual leader

■ Adhemar took over the key bishopric of Le Puy in southern France in the 1080s and supported Urban II in his efforts to strengthen papal power. Urban reciprocated by making him the spiritual leader of the First Crusade.

BOHEMOND OF TARANTO
(1058-1111)

The warrior

■ Bohemond was the Crusade's most experienced warrior and fiercely ambitious. He had annexed the area around the southern Italian city of Taranto, but was unable to gain further territory. The Crusade represented his only chance to expand his holdings.



GODFREY OF BOUILLON
(1060-1100)

The selfless

■ Godfrey was a known despoiler of church property. His low status compared to the other leaders gave rise to speculation that he had enlisted for personal gain. However, he proved to be one of the most selfless leaders of the Crusade.



RAYMOND OF TOULOUSE
(1041/1042-1105)

The Pope's man

■ Raymond was one of Christian Europe's most important princes and a staunch supporter of Pope Urban II.

TANCRED OF HAUTEVILLE
(1075-1112)

Interpreter

■ Tancred was the nephew of Bohemond and had little military experience when he joined the Crusade. He could speak Arabic, however, and was soon made second-in-command of that part of the army that rallied around his enterprising and charismatic uncle.



“Our men rode in the blood of the Saracens up to the knees of the horses”

>>> coast. When he was finally ready to join the Crusaders, he met a group of deserters on their way back to Europe who had told him that he was too late and that the Crusaders had been crushed in the defence of Antioch.

In haste, the emperor's forces turned back, burning everything behind them. Nothing was to be left to the Muslim forces Alexios expected were heading towards him.

Whether the Crusaders were ever told they had been abandoned is not known to historians, but by the end of June it was clear that there was no escaping it: they had to take the battle to the superior power.

On 28th June 1098, at first light, the Crusaders celebrated Mass. With bowed heads, they prepared to die. Encouraged by priests lining the city walls, they then marched out of Antioch. The Crusader army now consisted of just twenty thousand men. With only two hundred horses at their disposal, many knights had to fight on foot. The heavy city gates were torn open and the

Christian army, led by Bishop Adhemar and the Holy Spear, marched out of the city. When they faced the army of Kerbogha, however, many Crusaders felt that they were being reinforced from above. In their exhausted but spiritually aroused state, several reported seeing an army of knights on “white horses, whose standards were all white”, according to one eyewitness, appearing in the sky above the sun-flickering plain.

In one final effort, crying out to God, the Crusaders attacked. Overwhelmed by the strength that remained in the starving Christian army, Kerbogha's forces hesitated, crumbled and finally fled. The Crusader army was now in full control of the city.

“[With] God's right hand fighting with us... Our Lord Jesus Christ has bound the city of Antioch to the Roman religion and

faith,” the Crusader princes wrote in a letter to Urban II.

JERUSALEM CLEANSED IN BLOOD

The final conquest of Antioch did not bring the relief the Crusaders had expected. Instead, their commanders wasted the fertile harvest months, which they could have used to march on Jerusalem, by arguing over who had the right to the city.

The ambitious Bohemond of Taranto had immediately tried to secure a good position in Antioch. His great dream was to possess the city, and he did not intend to give it up easily. Raymond of Toulouse, on the other hand, believed that the Crusaders should remain bound by their oath to Alexios, to whom they had promised all their conquests.

It wasn't until mid-November that the First Crusade continued, but the discussion about Antioch was far from settled. On the way, Raymond of Toulouse, who had now become leader of the united Crusade, led the troops towards the town of Ma'arra. Here he hoped to take a piece of land for himself to replace the spoils he was likely to lose in Antioch.

The Crusaders besieged and captured the city, then set about looting and slaughtering its inhabitants, but the battle came

4-5

aides joined each knight on the Crusade. They acted as squires and servants.



with a heavy cost. While Bohemond and Raymond fought over who would have control over the town, the Crusaders starved to the point that they resorted to eating some of the inhabitants they'd killed. It was only when, shortly after the New Year, rank-and-file Crusaders set about tearing apart Ma'arra's walls, stone by stone, to show their discontent, that Raymond realised he and Bohemond had gone too far. The conquest of Jerusalem had to outweigh all other considerations. With Raymond at its head, the Crusaders set off again.

On 7th June 1099, the Crusaders finally caught their first glimpse of the Holy City, with its walls, towers and domes, from a hilltop, but it wasn't until over a month later (14th July) that the final assault began as siege towers clattered up Jerusalem's thick and heavily fortified walls.

The soldiers on the wall defended themselves as best they could with arrows, scalding pitch and flammable Greek fire missiles. After a day and a half, however, they were forced to abandon their defence, and Crusaders poured over the wall and into the streets of Jerusalem. Here they looted all the gold and other riches they could get their hands on while murdering the "pagans". Many Muslims took refuge in the al-Aqsa Mosque, but even there they

TECHNOLOGY.....

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Bishop invented holy war

Jesus Christ abhorred violence, yet Christians used war to achieve their aims. This was due in no small part to the North African bishop Augustine of Hippo's (354-430) just war theory: God would overlook violence if it was

declared by a bishop or king, had a moral purpose and was conducted charitably. Over the following centuries, the idea that God even rewarded war gained ground, culminating in Urban II's call for a Crusade.



were not safe. On 16th July, the Crusaders kicked open the door and killed everyone sheltering there.

"Our men rode in the blood of the Saracens up to the knees of the horses," the Crusader commanders proudly wrote in their report to the Pope.

"Oh, time so longed for! Oh, time remembered among all others! Oh, deed to be preferred before all deeds! ... Cleansed from the contagion of the heathen

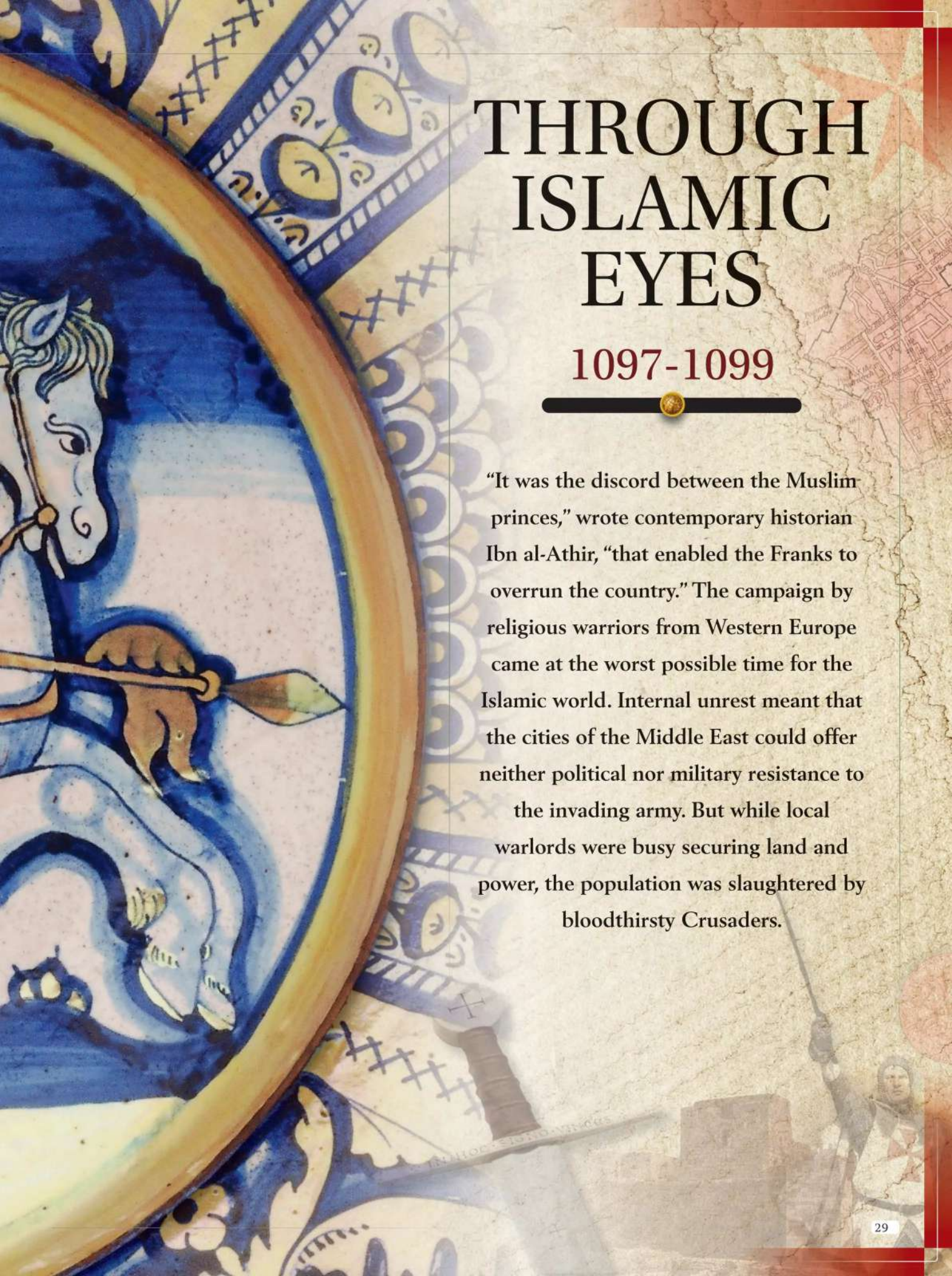
inhabiting it at one time or another, so long contaminated by their superstition, it was restored to its former rank," exulted Fulcher of Chartres after the fall of Jerusalem.

The Crusaders had achieved their goal, but the victory had been hard-won. The First Crusade had cost tens of thousands of innocent lives and started a war between Christians and Muslims that would rage in the Holy Land for the next two hundred years. ■

In a bloodlust, the Crusaders rampaged through Jerusalem, slaughtering up to 60,000 citizens.







THROUGH ISLAMIC EYES

1097-1099

“It was the discord between the Muslim princes,” wrote contemporary historian Ibn al-Athir, “that enabled the Franks to overrun the country.” The campaign by religious warriors from Western Europe came at the worst possible time for the Islamic world. Internal unrest meant that the cities of the Middle East could offer neither political nor military resistance to the invading army. But while local warlords were busy securing land and power, the population was slaughtered by bloodthirsty Crusaders.

1097-99

1097 Seljuk army loses a major battle at Dorylaeum to the Crusaders.

1098 The city of Antioch falls to the Christian invaders.

1098 A starved Christian army ravages Maarat and engages in cannibalism.

1098 Egyptian Fatimids capture the Holy City of Jerusalem.

1099 The Egyptian rulers of Jerusalem try in vain to negotiate peace with the Crusaders.

1099 The Crusaders massacre Jerusalem's citizens.

1097 >>> 1098 >>>

1099 >>>

On 1st July 1097, on a hill outside Dorylaeum in present-day Turkey, the Seljuk sultan Kilij Arslan watched as his warriors were slaughtered by an army of Christians. The sultan had expected to face an undisciplined army of peasants, but the Crusaders in their heavy armour were like human fortresses on the battlefield. The Christians' blades made short work of the sultan's elite marksmen. Panicked by the sight, Kilij Arslan leapt on his horse and galloped away to safety.

Contemporary historian Ibn al-Qalanisi wrote: "The Franks cut the Turkish army to pieces. They killed, pillaged and took many prisoners, who were sold into slavery."

FEAR SOON SPREAD

The Crusaders had been on the move for about a year. Their numbers had halved since leaving Western Europe, but the army, now 30,000–50,000 strong, was still a formidable force, and news of the defeat at Dorylaeum shocked the Muslim world.

"When this event, so shameful for Islam, became known," Ibn al-Qalanisi wrote, "there was real panic. Dread and anxiety swelled to enormous proportions."

The Muslims had good reason to be fearful – not just because of the strength

of the Crusader army, but also because of their own lack of resistance. The Islamic world was weak and divided when the Crusaders fell upon it from the north-west. Islam's traditional head, the caliph in Baghdad, was being challenged by the Fatimid counter-caliph in Cairo, and political power was scattered among an assortment of princes.

ARABS LACKED UNITY

The Arab world had long been a leader in art, culture and science, and Islam had spread across North Africa and far into Europe. Baghdad had been a thriving metropolis by the early ninth century, with an advanced water supply and sewage system, some of the world's best doctors, free hospitals, a postal service and multinational banking. But now the city was a shadow of its former self – buildings that had once housed libraries, hospitals and institutions of learning lay in ruins.

There were many reasons for the decline of Baghdad and the rest of the Muslim world, but the most significant was the arrival of the Seljuks. During the eleventh century, the Central Asian Muslim tribe powered across the steppes of Asia Minor and into the Middle East. With brutality, swift horses and sharp-shooting archers, the Turkic tribe subdued an area stretching from Afghanistan to the Mediterranean – including Baghdad, where, despite Islam's ban on alcohol, the Seljuks caroused drunkenly on the streets.

The caliph, Muhammad's successor, and the spiritual, political and military leader of the world's Muslims, became a symbolic presence. He passed the time by writing poetry or amusing himself with his harem of women. Many of the caliphate's Muslim cities were, therefore, more or less left to their own devices when the first Crusaders arrived on their rampage towards Jerusalem.

EMIR WAS BETRAYED

Soon rumours of the Europeans' atrocities began to spread. The



Locals sought refuge in the ancient castle of Hissn al-Akrad – which the Crusaders later developed into the famous Krak des Chevaliers.

people in the southern Turkish city of Antioch listened with trepidation to the reports from Dorylaeum and prepared for the worst. Food was not in short supply. The city had been home to some 200,000 people in Roman times, but now the population had dwindled to 40,000 and redundant residential quarters had been turned into fields. In addition, the city's governor, the emir Yagisiyan, had rationed essential foodstuffs such as cereals, oil and honey. The emir also ordered that the fortifications be inspected daily and declared that anyone who neglected security would be severely punished. As a last measure, he sent all Christian men out of the city with promises to take care of their women and children. Antioch had belonged to the Byzantine Empire until 1084, and so when the Crusaders marched on the city 13 years later – arriving on 20th October 1097 – the governor expected them to be a force sent by the Byzantine emperor to recapture his lost outpost. The emir, therefore, feared that the emperor might have hired spies among the Christian population, which is why he expelled the Christian men.

In his ten years of rule, Yagisiyan had often played his neighbours off against each other, broken alliances and promoted his interests by unsavoury means. He was therefore highly unpopular with other emirs in the area, even if he had merely played the same game as them in the divided realm of the Seljuks. Powerful emirs were constantly at loggerheads, alliances were made and broken, and sabres rattled on all sides. It was a rare emir, it was said, who died in his bed.

But despite the great enmity between the emirs, Yagisiyan had counted on the help of his fellow believers in a fight against the Christian barbarians. He soon learned otherwise, however. A force under King Ridwan of Aleppo – a kingdom in northern Syria – was indeed approaching, but the terrified soldiers had taken up a safe spot outside Yagisiyan's city, between the Orontes River and Lake Antioch, where they hoped to avoid a confrontation with the Crusaders. There they remained until the Europeans

At Dorylaeum, south-west of Byzantium, the Crusaders showed fearsome military strength and defeated a Seljuk ambush.



In less than a century, the Seljuks from Central Asia conquered large parts of what is now Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Israel.



TECHNOLOGY

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Quran translation was political

In 1147, the English scholar Robert of Ketton translated the Quran into Latin. Where the text could be interpreted in several ways, he always chose the most shocking. Loving embraces became perverse acts, which often

came with added comments. To the phrase: "Your wives are your fields. Go, then, into your fields as you will," he added: "That is, from the front and from the back." The aim was to show Islam as a sinful, carnal religion.

sought them out and began to slay them mercilessly. Soon after, the residents of Antioch could hear the sound of raucous laughter as the Crusaders shot the severed heads of Ridwan's soldiers over the walls to the horror of everyone in the besieged city.

After eight months of siege, Antioch finally fell when Yagisriyan was betrayed by one of his own. A disgruntled guard, Firouz, allowed the Crusaders in over the walls.

CRUSADERS WERE CANNIBALS

After the fall of Antioch in June 1098, it was the turn of the inhabitants of the city of Maarat al-Numan (also known as al-Ma'arra) to shelter behind their city walls as the Christian force laid siege to the city in late November. Maarat had hitherto been a peaceful spot, where the inhabitants grew

wine, figs and olives and lived quietly behind their circular walls.

On the evening of 12th December 1098, however, the peace was broken when the first Crusaders scaled the city walls. The city's leaders tried to negotiate a solution that would spare the lives of the citizens. Bohemond of Taranto, who led the Crusaders, agreed: he would spare their lives, he promised, if they would surrender and withdraw from certain buildings. That night, the people of Maarat slept fitfully, but with a faint hope that their elders had negotiated a tolerable solution to the unhappy situation. At dawn, however, they awoke to a nightmare as the Crusaders poured into the city.

"For three days they put people to the sword, killing more than one hundred

thousand people and taking many prisoners," wrote Arab historian Ibn al-Athir. The figure is wildly exaggerated, since historians estimate that Maarat al-Numan only housed 10,000 souls at the time – but of those, the Crusaders murdered around 8,000, and the horror of Ibn al-Athir's account is real enough. After months of marching through a wintry landscape, many Crusaders were almost insane with hunger, and the Europeans' own accounts describe what Maarat al-Numan's surviving inhabitants witnessed next:

"A terrible famine racked the army in Ma'arra, and placed it in the cruel necessity of feeding itself upon the bodies of the Saracens," the Crusade's commanders wrote in a report to the pope. The Crusader Radulf of Caen went into more detail: "In Ma'arra our troops boiled pagan adults in cooking pots; impaled children on spits and devoured them grilled."

LOCALS FLED INTO THE WOODS

The accounts of these atrocities fostered a deep loathing for the Crusaders among the Muslims. The idea of Westerners being wicked cannibals, who devoured men like wild animals, became permanently etched in the Muslim world's collective psyche.

Rumours of the massacre in Maarat spread rapidly. All along the southern coast of the Mediterranean, emirs, peasants, mothers, merchants and goatherds alike trembled at the thought of the Crusaders' barbarity. The poorest fled to the woods, where they settled among bears, wolves and



DOCTRINE: Muslim scholars preserved much of the knowledge of the classical world. Here, Socrates (left) is seen conversing with his disciples in a Muslim textbook.



BATTLE: the Shiite Fatimids from Egypt controlled Jerusalem when the Crusaders attacked in 1099, and they continued to fight the Europeans long after the city's fall. This twelfth-century Egyptian mural shows the Fatimids attacking the Crusaders from a fortified city.

hyenas. Those who could afford it, travelled inland to distant towns, while others sought the shelter of the nearest fortress.

The last option was chosen by the people of the Bukaya Plain in western Syria. On hearing of the Crusader army's approach, they gathered their cattle and, laden with supplies of oil and grain, climbed to Hisn al-Akrad (Fortress of the Kurds). The stronghold was positioned above a fertile plain on a high hill that offered views all the way to the Mediterranean coast. The bastion was built around 1031 by a group of Kurds, who inhabited a region that intersected present-day Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. The Kurds had taken refuge in the citadel in the past, but unfortunately for the people of the Bukaya Plain, the site was in poor repair 68 years later when the Crusaders arrived. The terrified peasants barricaded themselves in as best they could, however, and for a time, they managed to hold out against the besieging Crusaders. The success of their defence was due, at least in part, to the fact that they distracted the besieging Christian forces by releasing their cattle. The half-starved Crusaders immediately abandoned the fortress to hunt down the animals for food. But soon they gathered around the base of the castle walls once more. The terrified peasants knew that Hisn al-Akrad couldn't hold out for long and so, under the cover of darkness, they crept out of the castle and into the countryside.

Forty years later, the castle would become one of the Crusaders' most impressive fortresses, Krak des

“For three days they put people to the sword”

MASSACRE:
after an
eight-month
siege, the
Crusaders took
Antioch – to the
horror of its
inhabitants.

“We will go to Jerusalem in combat formation”

Chevaliers (Krak being a corruption of the word Akrad). But even before then, in the early wintry months of 1099, the dilapidated hilltop fortification began to be used as the headquarters of the Crusader army. Hoping to avoid the same fate as Maarat and Antioch, the neighbouring towns and villages now sent delegations to the castle hill with gifts for the new occupants – gold, cloth and plentiful supplies of food – all of which they humbly presented to the Crusaders.

In Tripoli, on the Lebanese coast, one fearful emir even offered gifts of money, horses, provisions and local guides to the Christian fighters when they passed by his city on 16th May after breaking out from Hisn al-Akrad. The bribe seemed to work, as the army moved on.

JERUSALEM TAKEN

While the Crusader army was busy pillaging and slaughtering its way through the rest of the Muslim world, changes were taking place in the Crusaders' final destination: Jerusalem.

On 1st July 1098, a large Egyptian army had wrested Jerusalem from the Seljuks. In Egypt, Shia Muslims ruled under the caliph of the Fatimid dynasty, based in Cairo, while Muslims in the Middle East formally came under the caliph of the Sunni Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad. The Sunnis and Shias had harboured a deep mistrust of each other since the seventh century, following a dispute between the Prophet's relatives.

Among Sunnis, there were even rumours – false as it turned out – that

the Crusade had been launched as the result of a secret alliance between the Fatimids and the Pope.

The rumours of the Shiite-Christian alliance were rooted in the close relationship of the Egyptian Fatimids with the Christian emperor in Constantinople. The two empires regularly exchanged intelligence, as both the caliph of Cairo and the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople were interested in winning back cities and lands from the invading Seljuks.

At first, the Egyptians rejoiced at the advance of the Crusader army, and during the siege of Antioch, they even sent a delegation with gifts, wishing the Christians a quick victory and proposing a deal: the Crusaders could have northern Syria if the Egyptians got the south – including Damascus and Jerusalem. But the Crusaders proved reluctant to ratify any agreement, prompting the Egyptians to take matters into their own hands and seize the Holy

City, where the prophet Muhammad was alleged to have met both Jesus and Moses.

2,900 That's the number of years a fortified city had stood in Jerusalem when the Crusaders first arrived.

BAREFOOT PROCESSION

In January 1099, as the Crusader army approached Jerusalem, the Egyptians' leading general, Al-Afdal Shahanshah, wrote to the emperor in Constantinople

for advice. But to the Egyptians' great surprise, the emperor – whose Byzantine empire had so far been the beneficiary of the Europeans' conquests – was forced to confess that he was no longer in control of the Crusaders. They were on their way to take Jerusalem to build a state of their own.

It was with trepidation, therefore, that the Egyptians sent a new, more attractive proposal to the Crusader army: in addition to half of Syria, they now promised to guarantee all Christians safe passage to pray in Jerusalem. Pilgrims could come and go as they wished, provided they travelled unarmed and in small groups.

The Crusaders' reply came as a crushing blow: “We will go all of us to Jerusalem, in combat formation, our lances raised.”

Left with no other choice, the Egyptians hastily reinforced the city's fortifications and hauled provisions inside the walls. The city was ready for the worst when, looking out from the top of the Tower of David, General Iftikhar al-Dawla, commander of the Egyptian garrison, spotted the Christian force approaching. An experienced general, he expected the Crusaders to build siege towers and dig trenches. He was stunned therefore when the first thing they did was to follow barefoot, chanting priests in a



The Christian Crusaders' entry into Jerusalem heralded a bloody religious purge that involved the murder of thousands of Muslims.

procession around the city's walls. They then hurled themselves, unarmed, against the stonework as though they expected the solid fortifications simply to give way at their touch.

What Iftikhar didn't realise was that the Crusaders were hoping that Jerusalem's walls would collapse in the same way as Jericho's, which, according to the Old Testament, fell after being circled six times by Joshua's horn-blowing followers. Iftikhar's amusement at the Westerners' mad antics was short-lived, however. When the walls didn't collapse of their own accord, the Crusaders started to prepare the materiel needed to take the city – ladders, siege engines, catapults and plenty of arrows.

CHRISTIANS ON THE RAMPAGE

On the night of 13th July, the attack began. Trebuchets hurled missiles against the walls, striking the straw-filled cotton sacks the defenders had hung there to cushion the blows. Then the Crusaders brought forward siege towers and started to assault the top of the city walls. Greek fire – a sticky, burning substance – rained down on the attackers from above, but it wasn't enough to keep the tenacious Christians at bay. By noon on 15th July, the Crusaders were scrambling over the top of the city wall. Once inside, the invaders opened the Pillar Gate – now called the Damascus Gate – and the Crusader army

The Seljuks' curved swords were better for long cuts than straight blades.



poured into the city. Like a chain-mailed tsunami, they rolled through the ancient city's crooked alleys, murdering everyone. Some Muslims sought refuge on the roof of the al-Aqsa Mosque, but the Christians sought them out and brutally cut them down. When a group of women sought shelter in the Dome of the Chain, near the Dome of the Rock, they too were slaughtered. The Crusaders went from house to house, slaying the occupants and throwing them out of windows.

The killing spree continued until 17th July. It was only then that princes and priests could finally go to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the supposed burial place of Jesus and the real goal of the journey. The Crusaders sang the Lord's praises while wearing their bloody clothes, testament to their destruction of the city's 'non-believers'. Afterwards, the Christian princes forced surviving Muslims to remove the bodies from the streets and burn them, whereupon the cleaners themselves were killed and burned at the stake. Jerusalem was to be a Christian city.

MUSLIMS DREAMED OF REVENGE

After the victory, the Crusaders set about establishing a kingdom in Jerusalem as well as a number of Christian states in and around the main cities in the area: Tripoli, Antioch and Edessa. The aim was both to

acquire wealth and to secure military bases on the road to Jerusalem.

The brutal behaviour of the Crusaders outraged the Muslims in the region. Judge Abu Saad al-Harawi set out from Damascus and rode three weeks through the desert to alert the caliph in Baghdad. Along with his followers, he forced his way into the palace to angrily address those present:

"How dare you slumber in the shade of complacent safety," he shouted, "leading lives as frivolous as garden flowers, while your brothers in Syria have no dwelling place save the saddles of camels and the bellies of vultures? Blood has been spilled! Beautiful young girls have been shamed and must now hide their sweet faces in their hands! Shall the valorous Arabs resign themselves to insult, and the valiant Persians accept dishonour?"

The caliph did nothing, however, and the Muslims in the newly Christian states had to adjust to a different way of life. To ensure stability, the Christian rulers allowed Muslims some freedom in religion and daily life. Problems often arose with newly arrived Westerners, however. Usamah Ibn Munqidh, who was sent to Jerusalem as a diplomat in 1140, recalled being manhandled by one such Christian, who "threw himself on me, seized me and turned my face to the east, saying 'That's how you pray.' The Christian had never seen anyone pray facing

Mecca. Usamah Ibn Munqidh found the Crusaders' way of life both vulgar and barbaric. The humiliation and pain of the Crusades was keenly felt by the population and many dreamed of revenge. The opportunity finally came in 1187, more than two generations after the fall of Jerusalem. Only then were the Muslims able to overcome internal strife and unite behind one man: the great commander Saladin. ■

EYEWITNESS

USAMA IBN MUNQIDH / (1095-1188)

WESTERN MEDICINE

“ They brought before me a knight who had an abscess on his leg ... I made a plaster ... and the swelling opened and improved. But a Frankish doctor [said] 'Bring me a strong knight with a well-sharpened battleaxe' ... [Both] soon arrived. The Frankish doctor placed the man's leg on a chopping block, telling the new arrival, 'Strike a sharp blow to cut cleanly.' Before my very eyes, the man struck an initial blow, but then, since the leg was still attached, he struck a second time. The marrow of the leg spurted out and the wounded man died that very instant ... I returned home, having learned much about the medicine of the Franks. ”





LIFE IN THE FIELD

1096-1270

Burning desert sun, thirst, famine and infectious diseases. On the long road to the Holy Land, the Pope's warriors faced dangers no one had imagined from home. Death was a constant threat and from the First Crusade to the final defeat nearly two centuries later, just as many Crusaders died from the rigours of travel as from the arrows and scimitars of the Muslims.

1096-1270

1096

A motley band of Crusaders sets out on the first Crusade.

1097 Crusaders

starve on their way across the Anatolian Plateau.

1191 Richard the

Lionheart conquers Cyprus, securing a supply point for later Crusades.

1202

Epidemics ravage Crusaders assembled in Venice.

1270 The Eighth

Crusade ends when France's King Louis IX dies of disease outside Tunis.

1096 >>>

1097 >>>

1191 >>>

1202 >>>

1270 >>>

During Easter 1248, the nobleman Jean de Joinville gathered his vassals at his estate in France.

That week, Joinville's son had been born, and the group, which included the richest men in the region, danced, ate and enjoyed themselves. But on the Friday, the mood became serious. Jean de Joinville called his people together and announced that he intended to go on a Crusade with the king. He also earnestly asked everyone to tell him if he had made any mistakes or done anyone any wrong, so that he could make amends before he left.

Jean de Joinville did not want to be burdened by quarrels with anyone when, under the leadership of King Louis IX, he set out on the Seventh Crusade. He knew that the road to the Holy Land was long, and the dangers along the way were great. Fighting the Muslims was just one of the threats on the route, which ran across Europe and Asia Minor, and then on to the Middle East.

During the arduous journey to the Holy Land, as many Crusaders died in shipwrecks or from hunger, thirst and disease as in battle.

CRUSADERS WERE A MOTLEY CREW

Few had really thought through what they were getting into when they decided to join the Crusades. Many signed up after one of the emotional speeches made by popes and priests across Western Europe in the wake of Pope Urban II's fiery call for the First Crusade in November 1095. With tales of Muslim atrocities and the suffering of fellow Christians, the preachers whipped up a mood that impelled onlookers to stand in turn and declare their willingness to set off. Solemnly, each new Crusader took a

legally binding oath to complete the Crusade and visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. He then received a cloth cross, which was immediately sewn on to his garments as a sign of his new status as God's chosen soldier.

The crosses on their chests united the Crusaders, but beyond that they were a ragtag collection. Some set off out of sheer religious fervour, and the richest left great estates and fine careers behind in order to help their fellow believers at the Pope's bidding. For them, service to the cross was the crowning glory of a life of honour. Others hoped to find land and fortune in foreign lands, especially the younger sons of noblemen or wealthy families. They had no prospect of inheriting their fathers' estates, as their older brothers were first in line, and the promise of new land near Jerusalem beckoned.

Historians know little about the motivations of the large group of ordinary men who gathered under the banner of the cross, because they left no letters or chronicles. But many probably left for the same reasons as thousands of migrants before and after them: a sense of adventure or dreams of a fresh start in the unknown. Bottomless debt or other insurmountable problems no doubt also prompted many to break away and seek the south and the Holy Land.

KNIGHTS AMONG THE ELITE

One group, however, stood out: the knights – the willing warriors of nobility. They were both the pride and problem children of >>>>

Richard the Lionheart conquered Cyprus in 1191, securing an important bridgehead near the Holy Land.



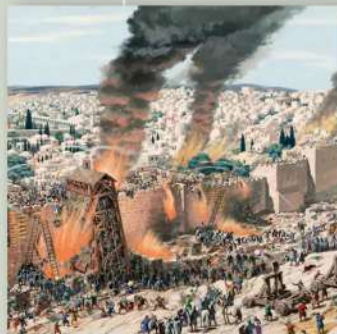
FEW CRUSADES SUCCEEDED

Only two of the Crusades reached their goal: Jerusalem. The rest of the Europeans' journeys to the Holy Land rarely went as the Crusaders had planned.

1096-99

First Crusade:

Much of Europe was gripped by Crusade mania when Pope Urban II called for a war against the Muslims. Tens of thousands set off and succeeded in capturing Jerusalem and establishing a number of Christian states.



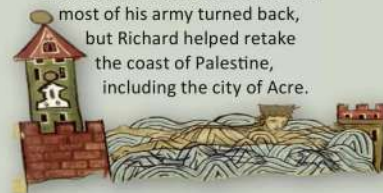
1147-49

Second Crusade:

When a Muslim force retook the county of Edessa in Syria, an army led by European kings set out to recapture the area. When this failed, the Crusaders tried unsuccessfully to conquer Damascus.

1189-92

Third Crusade: Jerusalem's fall to the commander Saladin in 1187 prompted the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and England's King Richard the Lionheart to set course for the Holy Land. Frederick drowned and most of his army turned back, but Richard helped retake the coast of Palestine, including the city of Acre.



BASTIONS EASED THE WAY TO THE HOLY LAND

The Crusaders' journey to the Holy Land was long and exhausting. Some sailed much of the way, while others crossed mountain ranges and scorching deserts on foot. A series of Christian strongholds along the route made the journey possible.

BRINDISI

■ The Via Appia ended at the heel of Italy's boot. From the port, ships sailed across the Adriatic to the Byzantine Empire. Strong winds made the journey dangerous in winter, and 400 Crusaders died in a shipwreck in 1097.



DURAZZO

■ The port city – now called Durrës, in Albania – was the gateway to the Byzantine Empire, and the main armies of the First Crusade passed through here on their way to the Holy Land. The city later fell to Venice.



VENICE

VENICE

■ Along with Pisa and Genoa, Venice was the Crusaders' favourite port. Ships carrying new Crusaders and pilgrims arrived here before Easter and Christmas. On their return, the ships brought silk, spices, oil and sugar to Europe.

BRINDISI

DURAZZO

CONSTANTINOPLE

■ One of the main focal points of the Crusades. The first Crusader army gathered here, while in 1204 the city itself fell victim to Crusaders who went on a rampage of drunkenness and rape, destroying both churches and the city library.

THE ANATOLIAN PLATEAU

■ Between the Pontic and Taurus Mountains lies the Anatolian Plateau, with hot summers – up to 40° C in the shade – and icy winters, with temperatures down to -45° C. Crusaders died of thirst and starvation in their hundreds.

CYPRUS

■ From Richard the Lionheart's capture of Cyprus in 1191 in the Third Crusade, the island was an important military bastion and source of supplies for Crusade armies. Richard later sold the island to the Knights Templar.



CONSTANTINOPLE

THE ANATOLIAN PLATEAU

CYPRUS

ACRE

■ The fortified city housed several knightly orders and served as the Crusaders' main port – a source of immense wealth for the kingdom of Jerusalem. The city fell in 1291, as the last Christian possession in the Holy Land.



ACRE

JERUSALEM

■ Christian possessions in the Holy Land

0 5 km

1202-04

Fourth Crusade: Intended to target Muslim Egypt, the Crusade went off the rails, partly for economic reasons; the Crusaders captured and sacked several Christian cities, including the Byzantine Empire's capital, Constantinople.

1217-21

Fifth Crusade: Pope Innocent III tried to keep this Crusade under control. The Crusaders captured Damietta in Egypt, but when they camped on the Nile's banks, the Egyptians opened the floodgates.



1228-29

Sixth Crusade: The German-Roman Emperor Frederick II promised to go on a Crusade as early as 1215, but postponed it time and again. When he finally went, he negotiated the conquest of Jerusalem without a fight.

1248-54

Seventh Crusade: When Jerusalem fell to Turkish forces in 1244, the Pope once more called for a Crusade against Muslims. Again, the Christians captured Damietta, but had to abandon the conquest of Jerusalem.

1270

Eighth Crusade: Appalled by the Egyptian advance in the Holy Land, the leader of the Seventh Crusade, the French King Louis IX, again headed south. The Crusaders attempted to capture Tunis, but returned home when the king fell ill and died during the siege.



medieval Western Europe. The knighthood had not yet developed into the disciplined, armour-clad warriors of the later Middle Ages, who in tight formation and with raised lances mowed down enemies at will, but they were the elite warriors of the time and therefore sought after by royalty and nobility. To earn a living, the knights, few of whom were rich, hired out their warrior skills for months at a time in return for being given a plot of land or an estate. Horses and equipment had to be paid for by the knight – a considerable expense, as a knight needed at least two steeds, one for transport plus a proper warhorse. In addition, the knight had to hire a groom in order to have time for his other duties.

For the average knight, it was therefore virtually impossible to afford to go on a Crusade without borrowing money. Joining the First Crusade cost the equivalent of five years' income, and many knights borrowed large sums for the journey, pawning everything they owned – usually with the church as pawnbroker. Even the wealthy nobleman Jean de Joinville pledged almost all his property in 1270 to join King Louis's Crusade.

As if the financial woes were not enough, many knights essentially sacrificed their lives, because of their fear of going to Hell. Like everyone else in medieval society, the willing mercenaries had close links to churches and monasteries. There they were constantly told that their job – killing – was against God's will and therefore led directly to an afterlife in the flames of Hell. Until then, the only way for knights to escape their sinful daily lives had been to

enter a monastery, but with the Crusades, they suddenly had the chance to practise their profession without damaging their soul. Now that the killing was done in Christ's name, a knight no longer had to fear falling into the devil's clutches – on the contrary, he was guaranteed a place in Paradise, as popes, monks and priests all assured him.

Knights therefore flocked to the banner of the cross and help form the fierce warrior armies of the Crusades.

DEFYING UNIMAGINABLE DISTANCES

In the First Crusade, a total of four armies set out in the late summer of 1096 from various locations in France, Germany, Italy and what is now the Netherlands. Typically, small bands of knights and volunteers gathered around the local prince, nobleman or major landowner to follow him to a designated meeting place. Here the group joined other forces from different parts of the region, and became part of large armies led by princes and

nobles with close ties to the Church and the Pope.

For most Crusaders, the journey was made on foot. The nobility and knights had horses, but everyone else had to walk. The course followed by the first armies was the ancient pilgrimage route along the Danube and into the Kingdom of Hungary, which had recently been Christianised. The roads had been built by the military of ancient Rome many centuries before, when the Romans had ruled Europe – and since then they had been allowed to decay. Crumbling and uneven, the roads provided anything but a comfortable surface for the Crusaders' aching feet.

Between Paris and Jerusalem – roughly the distance travelled by the average Crusader – lay more than 3,000 kilometres across flat plains and high mountains, and through almost impassable wilderness. Few knew anything at all about the world outside their own town or village. With the possible exception of the very richest and the highest clergy, travel was completely

Crossing the Anatolian Plateau, hundreds died of hunger and thirst during the First Crusade.



unknown to medieval folk. The experience of a foreign landscape, novel building styles, new languages and different cultures must have been overwhelming for most, whom historians say had never travelled more than 100 kilometres from home.

CRUSADERS TURNED ON THEIR HEELS

To cut gruelling miles off the route, some of the armies chose to set out from Italy's south-east coast and cross the Adriatic Sea to the Byzantine Empire. The voyage, however, was fraught with danger. In winter, the weather was often harsh and the waters too unsafe for sailing. Robert of Normandy's forces therefore had to wait in the port city of Brindisi all through the winter of 1096, and when the Crusaders finally set off in April 1097, things still went wrong. A ship, heavily laden with Crusaders, broke in half and 400 drowned. Rumour would later have it that the bodies, which subsequently washed up on the beach, had a cross stamped between their shoulder blades – a miracle that supposedly showed that God had received the drowning men into heaven as Christian martyrs. To the Crusaders waiting to sail, however, the incident looked more like a disaster than a miracle. Some had already taken advantage of the long, involuntary stay in Italy to reconsider the life of a Crusader and had quietly turned around

“ We suffered greatly from hunger and thirst, and found nothing to eat ”

and sneaked home. Now even more were leaving the army of the cross.

“Many faint-hearted who had not yet embarked returned to their homes, giving up the pilgrimage and saying that never again would they entrust themselves to the treacherous sea,” wrote an eyewitness, the priest and Crusader Fulcher of Chartres, one of the era's most important historians.

Later Crusades made even greater use of ships – to the horror of many Crusaders. Jean de Joinville, writing in dismay, told how, on their way from Marseilles to Cyprus, the horses were locked into a ship, and the door then closed and sealed, because “when the ship is on the high seas, all the said door is under water”. On the open sea, the ship was forced in the wrong direction by the wind, proving, according to Jean de Joinville, “how foolhardy is that man who dares ... to place himself in such peril, seeing that ... you lie down not knowing whether, in the morning, you may find yourself at the bottom of the sea”.

BURNING THROATS

The sea, however, was far from the worst threat on the journey. Hunger and thirst were the Crusaders' constant companions, perhaps most notably during the First Crusade of 1096–99. The plan was to travel light and

get all the necessities along the way, and on the first part of the journey, this went well. The Crusaders had sold or pawned so many possessions that their chests and purses were overflowing with coins, and they could simply buy what they were unable to take from the fields and forests on the route.

But as soon as the Crusaders moved past Constantinople and into Muslim territory, everything changed. Although the Byzantine emperor had given the Crusaders food and other necessities, supplies quickly ran out and the men had to scavenge for food among the locals. A tactic that required there be something worth looting – which wasn't always the case. After narrowly defeating a Seljuk army outside Dorylaeum in eastern Anatolia, the Crusaders had to trek across barren plains – Turkish soldiers had burnt all the crops.

“We suffered greatly from hunger and thirst, and found nothing at all to eat except prickly plants, which we gathered and rubbed between our hands,” the chronicle *Gesta Francorum* tells us.

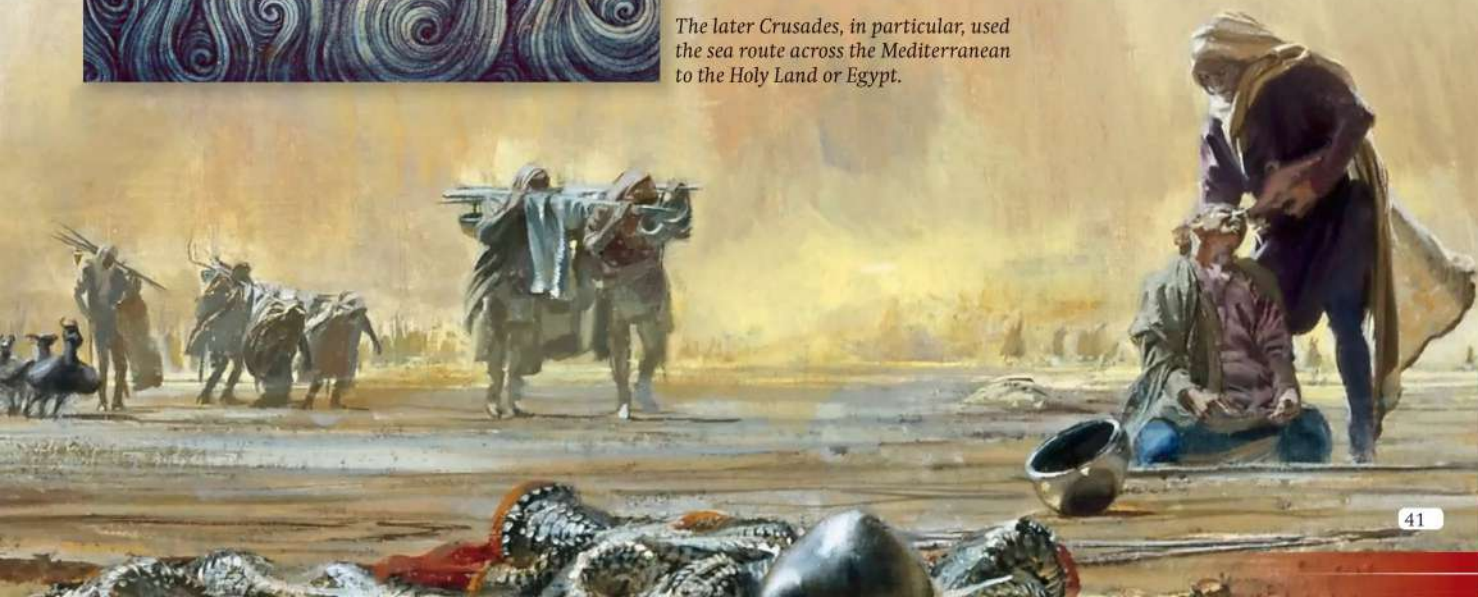
Day after day, the sun relentlessly burned across the plain, and eventually the Crusaders, mere shadows of themselves, could think of nothing but finding a drop of liquid to quench their thirst.

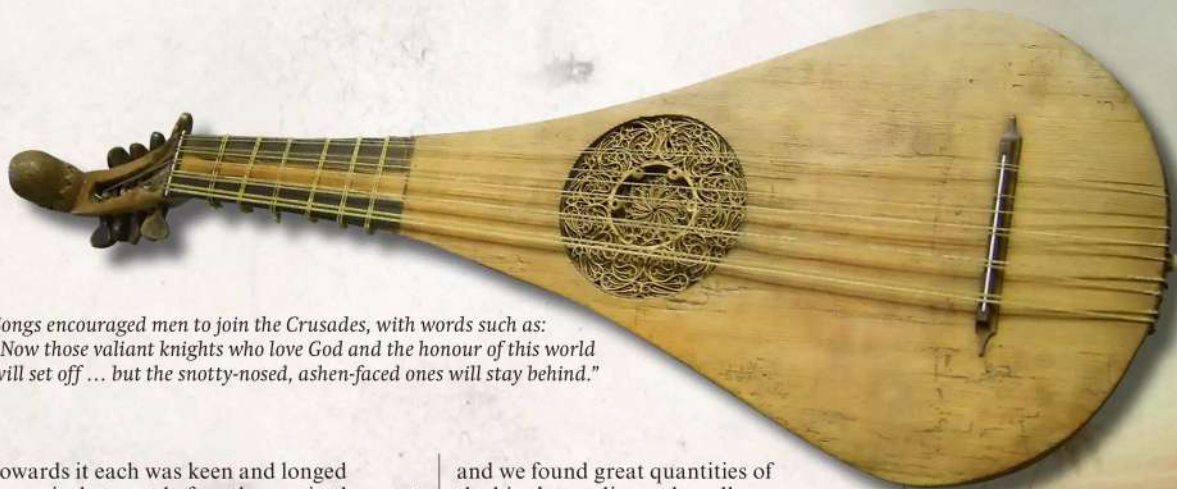
“Many men, growing weak from the exertion and the heat, gaping with open mouths and throats, were trying to catch the thinnest mist to cure their thirst,” recounted the historian Albert of Aachen.

“The river they had longed for and searched for was revealed. As they hurried



The later Crusades, in particular, used the sea route across the Mediterranean to the Holy Land or Egypt.





Songs encouraged men to join the Crusades, with words such as: "Now those valiant knights who love God and the honour of this world will set off ... but the snotty-nosed, ashen-faced ones will stay behind."

>>>> towards it each was keen and longed excessively to get before the rest in the great throng. They set no limit to their drinking, until very many who had been weakened, men as well as beasts of burden, died from drinking too much." Five hundred died of hunger and thirst on the journey in 1097, Albert of Aachen estimated. Even the knights' horses perished in large numbers.

"Many of our knights had to go on as foot soldiers, and for lack of horses we had to use oxen as mounts, and our great need compelled us to use goats, sheep and dogs as beasts of burden," said one of the Crusader Bohemond of Taranto's men.

The next Crusade followed the first expedition's policy of downgrading provisions, but with the third, conditions improved slightly. The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa demanded that every German Crusader bring enough money to feed himself and his family for a year, and diplomats were subsequently sent to secure supplies for the advancing army.

With his conquest of Cyprus in 1191, Richard the Lionheart also secured a safe supply base for future Crusaders. This benefitted Jean of Joinville, among others, during the Seventh Crusade. "When we came to Cyprus, the king was already there,

and we found great quantities of the king's supplies ... the cellarge of the king, and his treasure and his granaries," he reported.

BLACK MARKETEERS MADE MONEY

Whether the Crusaders had brought food or not, however, the many sieges of Muslim towns often became an ordeal. In Antioch in southern Turkey, a siege during the First Crusade dragged on for eight months. At first, the Crusaders could gorge themselves on wine and grain from the area's bountiful fields and nibble fruit that hung heavily from the trees. But as winter set in, the food ran out. Raids by Muslim garrisons stationed nearby prevented the Crusaders from searching further afield for food, and a cold and desolate rain fell, turning the Crusaders' camp into a pit of mud, to which they gave the unflattering nickname "the pissoir".

In spare moments, the best-educated Crusaders wrote letters home about their plight. Here they could unburden their hearts and tell of the suffering that came with being a soldier of the Lord.

"Before ... Antioch, indeed throughout the whole winter, we suffered for our Lord Christ from excessive cold and enormous torrents of rain," wrote the Crusader Stephen of Blois to his wife, Adele.

"What some say about the impossibility of bearing the heat of the sun throughout Syria is untrue, for the winter there is very similar to our winter in the West," he said.

As the siege dragged on, local traders began selling supplies to the Crusaders at inflated prices. They were so expensive that the poorest Crusaders had to give up immediately, but even wealthy nobles soon began to run out of money. By March 1098, many were so hungry that they ate "thistles which because of the lack of firewood were not well cooked and therefore irritated the tongues of those eating them. They also ate horses, asses, camels, dogs and even rats. The poorer people ate even the hides of animals and the seeds of grain found in manure," said Fulcher of Chartres.

Other times, Crusaders got trapped in a city or fortress they had captured. During the First Crusade, a Turkish army confined the Europeans in a fort at Nicaea in north-west Turkey, cutting them off from



water. The consequences were terrible: "Our men were therefore so terribly afflicted by thirst that they bled their horses and asses and drank the blood; others let down belts and clothes into a sewer and squeezed out the liquid into their mouths; others passed water into one another's cupped hands and drank," wrote the unknown author of the *Gesta Francorum*.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES SPREAD

Invasions and sieges were also breeding grounds for viruses and bacteria. The Crusaders lived in close quarters, were often exhausted and starving, and were forced to consume contaminated food and water. Dysentery was rampant within the camps, as were typhoid fever and other infectious diseases. In August 1098, for example, as many as 1,500 newly

EYEWITNESS

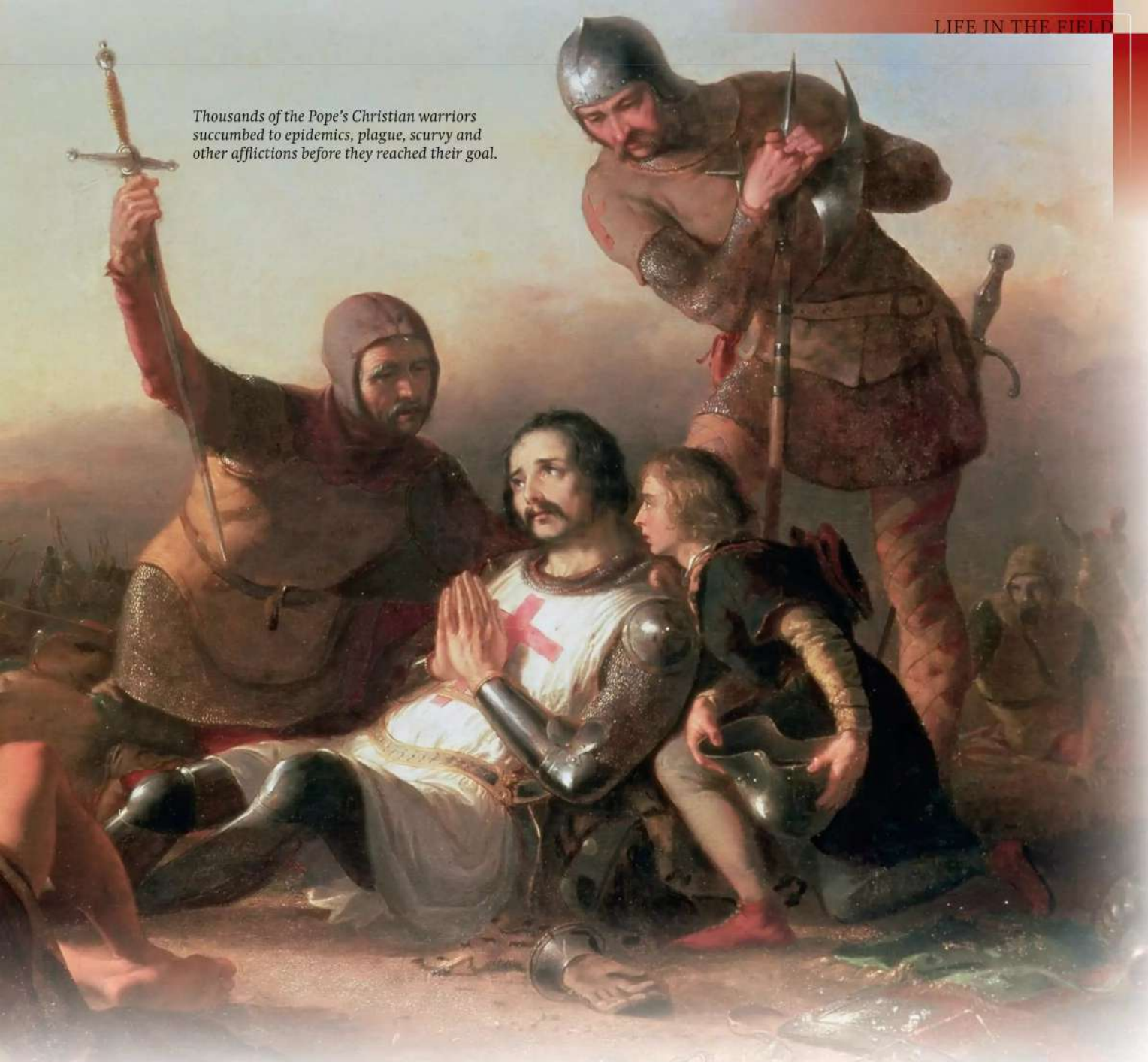
GESTA FRANCORUM / Summer 1098

BESIEGED ATE LEATHER, THISTLES AND FIG LEAVES



"Blasphemous enemies of God kept us so closely shut up in the city of Antioch that many of us died of hunger, for a small loaf cost a bezant, and I cannot tell you the price of wine. Our men ate the flesh of horses and asses ... all things

were very expensive. So terrible was the famine that men boiled and ate the leaves of figs, vines, thistles and trees. Others stewed the dried skins of horses, camels, asses, oxen or buffaloes, which they ate."



Thousands of the Pope's Christian warriors succumbed to epidemics, plague, scurvy and other afflictions before they reached their goal.

arrived Crusaders in Antioch died of plague alone.

The Crusaders had not been exposed to diseases in their native northern European environment, and their immune systems were ill-equipped to fight them. During the siege of Acre during the Third Crusade, an unknown epidemic took the lives of "six archbishops and patriarchs, 12 bishops, 40 counts and 500 men of noble rank; also a vast number of priests, clergy and others, which cannot be accurately counted", says the chronicle *Itinerarium Regis Ricardi*, which describes the exploits of Richard the Lionheart during the Third Crusade.

However, the diseases could also set in long before the Crusaders reached the Holy

Land. During the Fourth Crusade, a large gathering of Crusaders was forced to wait for a long period of time, crowded together on the barren Lido sandbar off Venice: "An

50 %
of deaths during the Crusades were due to hunger, thirst and disease, historians estimate.

unusual mortality rate now arose. The result was that the dead could barely be buried by the living," an anonymous Crusader from the Rhineland recounted in the eyewitness account *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*.

TREATED WITH OPIUM

As a defence against disease, the Crusaders brought their own doctors, whose qualifications varied greatly. Some were highly educated physicians from prestigious universities in Padua, Paris and Bologna, while others were simply barbers with the

skills to perform vein dissections. These mostly harmful bloodlettings were the universal treatment of the time, used by the Crusaders as prevention and treatment against all kinds of diseases and ailments.

On the battlefield, too, doctors stepped in to stop bleeding, dress wounds or patch up broken limbs. Using simple methods, surgeons performed operations on broken bones, and amputated limbs afflicted with serious wounds or gangrene.

How many survived the primitive amputations, where the bone was simply cut with a saw and then bound, is unknown. However, skeletal remains show that many operations were surprisingly successful – fractures and deep wounds healed nicely, and the patient died only much later and from entirely different causes. However, the treatment was hardly problem-free, as the >>>

“Great pity it was to hear the cry of people whose dead flesh was being cut away”

>>>> anaesthetic was both ineffective and dangerous. Opium was often used, either mixed with wine or soaked on a sponge. The patient was then roused afterwards by having a fresh sponge soaked in vinegar passed under their nose, but whether he would regain consciousness was tricky to gauge, because sponge anaesthetics were particularly difficult to dose accurately. Historians believe that the anaesthetic, combined with the doctors' interventions, often resulted in death, especially if surgery was performed on the head – fractures and wounds to the skull are often associated with breathing difficulties, which the anaesthetic exacerbated. The risk of death was not reduced by the fact that, in addition to opium, doctors probably also used plants or herbs such as mandrake root, scarlet thistle, bilberry and bullrush. Many of these were lethal in unskilled hands.

SURGEONS CUT AWAY GUMS

Often, however, doctors had to operate without anaesthetic at all, and there is much evidence that this was the case when Jean de Joinville, during the Seventh Crusade, witnessed doctors' attempts to alleviate the effects of scurvy among the Crusaders. No one knew how the disease was contracted, and medieval physicians therefore searched blindly for a treatment for the severe symptoms, which were caused by a lack of vitamin C and coincided with a dearth of fresh supplies among the army:

“There came upon us [a] sickness ... such that the flesh of our legs dried up, and the skin upon our legs became spotted, black and earth colour, like an old boot,” Jean de Joinville wrote. In the final stages of the disease, the gums rotted away and all the

Crusade doctors could do was cut off the diseased flesh so the patient could have something to eat and drink.

“Great pity it was to hear the cry throughout the camp of the people whose dead flesh was being cut away; for they cried like women labouring of child,” wrote Jean de Joinville.

MORE THAN A THIRD DIED

The many ordeals along the way meant that few Crusaders were lucky enough to return from the Crusades to tell of their experiences, like Jean de Joinville. Historians do not know how many died in battle or of disease during the Crusades, but the dead must no doubt have numbered in the hundreds of thousands.

Among the wealthiest Crusaders, an estimated 25-40 percent died. The mortality rate among ordinary foot soldiers, who left fewer traces in written sources, is anyone's guess. But their chances of returning alive to Europe – or making a dignified life for themselves in the Holy Land – were probably far worse than those of the noblemen and clergy. The foot soldiers lived in worse conditions than their wealthy travelling companions, starved more often and had to fight battles wearing inadequate armour or none at all.

The total death toll of the Crusades – Christian and Muslim, civilian and military – was probably in the millions. ■

In 1204, Crusaders went on a rampage at Constantinople, spurred on by a debt to the doge of Venice and the exiled Byzantine prince Alexios, who wanted to be emperor in place of his uncle.

TECHNOLOGY.....

CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

DAILY LIFE.....



Crusader children sold into slavery

In 1212, Crusade fever raged across Europe, and thousands of children, young people, women, the elderly and lowly churchmen came together in the Children's Crusade, inspired by two boys who claimed to have received a

call from God. The Pope had nothing to do with it but the participants set off for Jerusalem nonetheless. The Crusade petered out as the Crusaders died of hunger or thirst, while some were captured and sold into slavery.







CITY OF GOD

1099-1291

The dream of reaching Jerusalem pushed the Crusaders onward. They endured hunger and bloody battles on the exhausting 3,000-kilometre march to reach the Holy City. When the goal was finally reached, the city surpassed all expectations in terms of wealth and glory. But the Crusaders were not the only ones interested in the city. Jerusalem was also sacred to Jews, Muslims and a host of other Christian denominations. Everyone wanted a part of the City of God, and soon the fighting began.

1099-1291

1099

The Crusader state of Jerusalem is established.

**1100**

Baldwin I is crowned as Jerusalem's first king.

1131

The Kingdom of Jerusalem has its heyday.

1169 Muslim emir Saladin increases pressure on Jerusalem.

1187

Muslims manage to recapture the Holy City.

1291

The Kingdom of Jerusalem finally perishes.

1099 >>> 1100 >>> 1131 >>> 1169 >>> 1187 >>> 1291 >>>

On 17th July 1099, Crusaders gathered in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Still wearing their blood-splattered garments from the previous days' massacre of the city's Muslims and Jews, they clapped their hands, sang and thanked God for their victory over the unbelievers.

"This is the day which the Lord has made; we shall rejoice and be glad in it," wrote the chronicler Raymond of Aguilers. After the service, the Crusaders walked solemnly in procession through the city. Bodies and severed limbs still lay scattered in the streets, and the stench of death hung in the air between empty houses.

The Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem offered riches and trading opportunities on a scale of which the Crusaders had scarcely dared dream. Before long, the Holy City was a thriving metropolis. The Crusaders' rush to victory was accompanied by a remarkable humility, however. When they

chose Godfrey of Bouillon as their leader immediately after the triumph, they bestowed upon him the title of Defender of the Holy Sepulchre. He couldn't be king, because such a designation was not appropriate in a city where only God could have supreme authority.

For a believer who had grown up with the Bible's accounts of Jesus's last days unfolding there, Jerusalem was bound to inspire wonder. But strong feelings about the city were not exclusive to Christians.

The city was sacred to all three religions that worshipped God. Abraham, the progenitor of all the peoples of Israel according to the Torah, Bible and Quran, had lived there, and it was in Jerusalem that Christ was executed and later rose from the dead – the holiest and most important event of Christianity.

According to Islamic tradition, Muhammad was also miraculously led through the Temple one night to ascend to the seven heavens, where he met the

Jerusalem's fourth ruler, Baldwin III, minted silver coins bearing a cross.



prophets Jesus, Moses and Abraham. Throughout the ages, the city had alternated between the three religions, and everyone felt a sense of belonging and ownership over it. Christian faiths other than Catholicism – Armenians, Syrians, Greeks, Jacobites, Nestorians and Copts – also considered Jerusalem their sacred city.

Opposition therefore brewed not only between Jerusalem and the surrounding Muslim kingdoms, but also among Christians themselves.

CHRISTIANS THROWN OUT

Jerusalem was certainly the City of God. The question was, which



God? Thus, the Crusaders soon abandoned their humility and set about setting the agenda and imposing Roman Catholic rule over Jerusalem. Their methods were ruthless. The Jews and Muslims who remained in the city after the massacre were captured and sold into slavery.

Historians do not know how many survived, but sources report that the Crusaders took a lot of prisoners and then held a slave auction for two days. However, they spared some of the most high-ranking and important Muslims in order to ransom them. Among them was the learned sheikh Abd al-Salam al-Ansari, for whom the Crusaders demanded one thousand dinars. When no one would pay, the Crusaders killed him.

The city's surviving Jews fared better. Along with 300 Hebrew books, they were bought and rescued by fellow Egyptians.

Even the Crusaders' Christian brothers were left in no doubt about who was in charge. Jerusalem had had its own ecclesiastical head, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, ever since the earliest days of the Church. In July 1099, a few days after the conquest of Jerusalem, the Crusaders deposed the incumbent patriarch and installed their own, Arnulf of Chocques.

As one of his first acts in office, he denied non-Roman Catholic Christians access to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which, according to Christian lore, was

built on the spot where Jesus had been buried. Arnulf also played up his ties to the Church by proclaiming that he was in possession of a splinter from the cross upon which Christ had died.

The relic turned out to be a scratched gold and silver crucifix, said to contain a splinter of the cross. Arnulf celebrated the find, which he'd had to torture the townspeople to get his hands on, with a lavish feast in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Christianity,
Islam and Judaism
are collectively
known as the
Abrahamic
religions, as they all
recognise Abraham
as their progenitor.

Jerusalem was not only a religious haven, it was also rich in earthly goods, such as gold, silver, precious stones and fine clothes. The people struggled at first, though. After the conquest, most Crusaders had returned

home or moved on to the other Crusader states: Antioch and the counties of Edessa and Tripoli. They went together under the name of *Outremer*, which in Frankish means "Overseas".

Only about 300 knights and 2,000 foot soldiers remained in Jerusalem. The ordinary inhabitants could barely fill a single block. However, the empty streets soon teemed with pilgrims, immigrants and traders. A large crowd of poor Syrian and Armenian Christians also arrived, invited by King Baldwin I, Godfrey's younger brother and successor, who, unlike his sibling, had no qualms about wearing a crown on his head and calling himself king.

Trade was brisk, from both Venice, to which Baldwin granted special trading

CRUSADER STATES

■ The Crusader states were known as Outremer and were all established between 1098 and 1109. The principality of Antioch and the counties of Edessa and Tripoli functioned as vassal states under the Kingdom of Jerusalem.



rights, and the Muslim neighbours, whose traders were not allowed to stay overnight in the Christian city, but were welcome to bring their goods into town during the day. In the ports, ships arrived heavily laden with goods – sugar cane and olive oil came from the countries around the Mediterranean, while luxury goods, such as spices and silk, arrived from further east.

QUEEN REBUILT CHURCH

Jerusalem's earliest kings were closely linked to the First Crusade. Baldwin I was succeeded by his cousin, Baldwin II, but then a crisis arose in the succession. Baldwin II had no son or other obvious male heir. The king solved this problem by choosing his daughter, Melisende, as ruler of Jerusalem.

A woman could not formally be head of state at that time, so he had to marry Melisende off and crown both her and her husband. For Baldwin, however, there was no doubt as to which of the two would rule after him.

The choice of Melisende's husband fell on Fulk, Count of Anjou, who was known as an able man and was also a link to the Frankish kingdom, which the Crusaders needed in order to be amply supplied with knights and – in times of need – money.

The couple was crowned in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1131. After the ceremony, in which Fulk was presented with the kingdom's orb and sceptre, he expected to serve as regent. Melisende soon >>>

The Crusaders did not consider their mission complete until they had prayed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

“Lovely Frankish women, foul-fleshed and sinful, selling themselves for gold,”

>>> dispelled his misconception, as she proved to be a strong and determined woman, with the courage of her convictions. As queen, Melisende oversaw an extensive construction programme in Jerusalem, including a major rebuilding of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and she played an important role in the day-to-day running of the government.

In many ways, Jerusalem was the epitome of piety. Everyday life and celebrations revolved around the holy sites and religious festivals. Feast days were celebrated with processions through the winding streets of the ancient city. At Easter, events culminated with a crowd, including the king, gathering in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to watch the Holy Fire light up what Christians considered to be Christ's tomb. As the priest led evensong, euphoria spread through the crowd and, as if by a miracle, a flame flared up and lit the tomb. The fire was used to light the church lamps and then carried through the town for all to see.

JERUSALEM WAS WILD WEST

Materially, the people of Jerusalem lacked nothing. The city's better-off inhabitants surrounded themselves with damask on the walls, fine ceramics, carved tables and porcelain plates, while their relatives back home in Europe still wore coarse wool and made do with a few primitive possessions.

Life was comfortable in Jerusalem. Historians believe that the Crusaders bathed regularly, most houses had toilets, and the sewers even worked. But the city

also had a downside. Jerusalem was a bustling melting pot, at once rough frontier garrison and multicultural world city. Jerusalem and the other Crusader states were the Wild West of their day, and when it came to violence, prostitution and general depravity, the Holy City was a match for any gold-rush town. Lowlifes from near and far gathered in the city in search of wealth or adventure. Outside the shops in the old, winding streets, soldiers sat gambling, and every tavern had a heavy chain stretched across the door, so that Crusaders in high spirits could not simply ride into the bar, as was their wont.

Periodically, a shipload of prostitutes arrived from Europe to occupy the town's soldiers and the sailors from the Italian merchant ships.

“Lovely Frankish women, foul-fleshed and sinful ... selling themselves for gold ... like tipsy adolescents, they dedicated as a holy offering what they kept between their thighs,” wrote the Muslim commander Saladin's secretary, Imad al-Din.

Punishments in the Crusader city were harsh and merciless. If a woman was found guilty of adultery, her nose was slit, while the penalty for men was castration. Dismemberment while still alive was also not uncommon in Crusader Jerusalem.

HOSPITAL SERVED HALAL

Tolerance flourished, nonetheless. In Jerusalem's heyday, under Melisende and Fulk, the Crusaders realised that coexistence with the Muslims was good for business. Daily life was marked by a lack of

DECISIVE MOMENTS

KING'S TACTICAL BLUNDER

In 1163, Muslim-controlled Egypt was weak, and Jerusalem's King Amalric captured the important port city of Alexandria. However, the king quickly threw away his advantageous position. As soon

as he had collected taxes, he withdrew his forces and the Syrian ruler Nur ad-Din took the city. Had Amalric managed to hold Egypt, the Kingdom of Jerusalem would probably have survived and not met its demise in 1291.





The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was the real target of the Crusade. The church is an important symbol for Christianity as it is believed to have been built over Christ's tomb.

prejudice far removed from the war against the infidels. Western women, according to historians, wore heavy Arab-style make-up and veils when out and about. The men wore linen robes and traditional Arab headgear, the *keffiyeh*, over their armour. This ensured that the metal was not heated by the sun, so the knights could avoid heat stroke. The Christian Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John even had its own halal kitchen to serve Muslim patients.

Some Crusaders went so far as to speak Arabic, renounce pork and live on Arabic food. They furnished their houses with small courtyards containing pools and fountains, like those of wealthy Muslims.

Friendships also extended between Christians and Muslims, both on the street and in higher circles. When the ruler of Damascus, Unur, paid a state visit to Jerusalem in 1140, King Fulk developed a close friendship with Unur's adviser, the politician and chronicler Usama ibn Munqidh.

Both were keenly interested in horses and hunting with hounds and hawks, and their conversations were marked by mutual interest and respect.

"They told me you were a great knight, but I hadn't really believed it," Fulk greeted his Muslim guest.

"My lord, I am a knight of my race and people," Usama replied, at once both proud and humble.

For some, this integration was too much. "For we who were Occidentals have now become Orientals. He who was a Roman or a Frank has in this land been made into a Galilean or a Palestinian ... We have already forgotten the places of our birth; these are unknown to many of us or not mentioned any more," the Crusader Fulcher of Chartres acidly remarked.

Friendship and understanding had limits, however, and Usama found it hard to hide his laughter when a Crusader in the Dome of the Rock – the cave in which the Bible says Christ was buried – excitedly showed him what he thought was a picture of "God when he was young". Instead, it turned out to be an icon of the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus.

Usama also regarded the newly arrived Europeans, who were not yet influenced by Muslim thought and customs, as pure barbarians – "an accursed race that will not become accustomed to anyone not of their own race", he wrote.

The Christians, for their part, had little faith in the Muslims either. A French knight, who always referred to Usama as his brother, gleefully offered to take the



The chronicler William of Tyre wrote a work about the Outremer knighthood. Here they are seen conquering the Asia Minor city of Nicaea in 1097.



THROWN OUT: When Jerusalem was reached, the Crusaders threw other denominations out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



TOMB OF JESUS: The church was supposedly built over Christ's tomb. It is also said that five of the 14 stops Jesus made on the way to his execution are in the church.

>>>> Muslim's 14-year-old son to Europe so that the boy could learn wisdom and chivalry. "When he returns, he will be a truly rational man," the Frank promised.

ARAB CONFIDENCE THREATENED

The good relationship between Fulk and Usama was helped by the peace that reigned between the Christian city and the Islamic world for the first 40 years of the Kingdom of Jerusalem's history. Internal strife and the lack of a strong leader meant that the Muslims could not oppose the Christian invasion and continued occupation of Jerusalem.

By the mid-twelfth century, however, the political climate began to change and soon the Arabs were ready to throw themselves into the fight for the Holy City. By 1146, Nur ad-Din had become ruler of the

powerful Syrian city of Aleppo.

Not just a skilled warrior, he was also a gifted and charismatic tactician. A new

sense of self began to grow among the Muslims. Under King Baldwin III, son of Fulk and Melisende, Nur ad-Din's troops invaded Antioch. They'd also tried to seize Jerusalem, but had been beaten back. As the years passed, Nur ad-Din's power grew, as did the Arabs' confidence. The Crusaders knew that the Muslim ruler was a force to be reckoned with.

Baldwin III, meanwhile, had been succeeded by his brother Amalric. The new king was keen to extend his power, so when the Muslim Fatimid dynasty in Egypt began to falter, the king gathered his considerable force of Crusaders and set off. Nur ad-Din had the same idea and also wanted to gain power over Egypt, but at Alexandria he was defeated by the Christian army, which then captured the important port city. Amalric returned to Jerusalem, however, without consolidating his position. Nur ad-Din was soon able to take the city and conquer both Egypt and the areas around Jerusalem.

By 1169, the Holy City was largely surrounded by Muslims, who now

controlled Syria, Yemen and part of present-day Iraq, as well as Egypt.

By then, Nur ad-Din had been succeeded by Saladin, emir of Arab-controlled Egypt. Saladin was not only a skilled commander, but was also loved and admired by his loyal subjects – a combination that did not bode well for the Crusaders' Jerusalem.

35 %

of the population of the Crusader states had European roots in the 1180s.

LEPER KING LED ARMY

While the Arabs had a strong leader for the first time in decades, fate dealt an unexpected blow to the royal power in Jerusalem. Even as a child, it was clear that Amalric's son, Prince Baldwin, was not like other children.

The historian and archbishop William of Tyre was hired as his teacher and noticed that the boy, who was otherwise lively and bright, did not respond to the pushes and blows of his peers during play. William noticed that "his right arm and hand were particularly numb ... The lad's father was informed, physicians consulted. In the process of time, we recognised the early symptoms. It is impossible to refrain from

QUEEN MELISENDE 1105-1161

RULER OF JERUSALEM

■ Melisende was destined to succeed her father, King Baldwin II, but she had to fight for power. She may have been crowned co-regent to her husband, Fulk of Anjou, but women at the time were expected to keep a low profile – a view Fulk fully shared. When he was later accused of stabbing Melisende's would-be lover, she took her chance and seized power. Only when her son Baldwin III

took her out by military force did she lose her grip on Jerusalem. Baldwin, however, could not do without his mother's political acumen and good connections, so she served as his advisor until his death. The historian William of Tyre was fascinated by Melisende and wrote that she "had risen so far above the normal status of women that she dared undertake important measures".

Regent – Restored and rebuilt the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – Helped plan Second Crusade

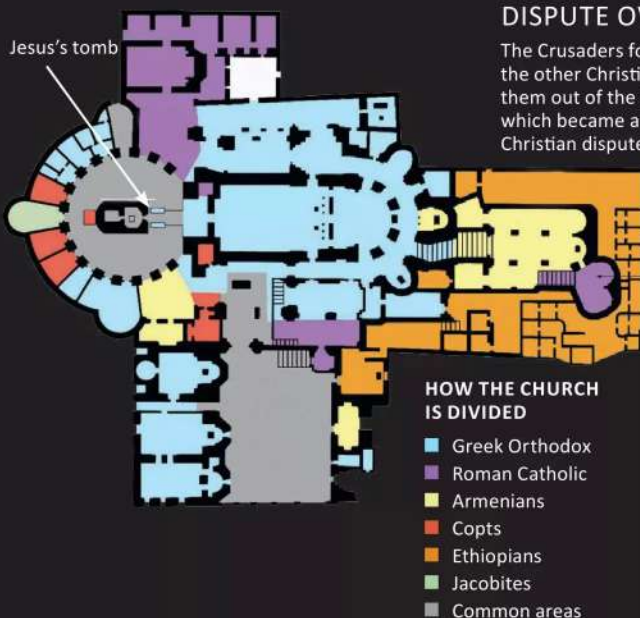


DISPUTE OVER CHURCH

The Crusaders found it difficult to get along with the other Christian denominations and threw them out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which became an important pawn in the internal Christian dispute. When Jerusalem was conquered

by the Arab commander Saladin in 1187, he left the church open to all Christian pilgrims, which meant that the strife continued. Only when the Ottoman Empire took Jerusalem over and divided the church between the different faiths in 1767, did peace descend upon the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The sharing of rights and responsibilities was confirmed in 1853, with what was called the Status Quo, which still stands.

The rising power of the emir Saladin was to herald troubled times for Jerusalem.



HOW THE CHURCH IS DIVIDED

- Greek Orthodox
- Roman Catholic
- Armenians
- Copts
- Ethiopians
- Jacobites
- Common areas

tears." Baldwin had leprosy. The best medical experts, ironically Arabic at that time, were brought to the court. Abu Sulayman Dawud was put in charge of a team of doctors who treated the prince. However, nothing could halt the disease, which would inevitably lead to disfigurement and early death.

When King Amalric died of dysentery at the age of 38 during a campaign, the leper prince was named Baldwin V.

"Day by day, his condition became worse, the extremities of his face were especially attacked so that his faithful followers were moved with compassion when they looked at him," wrote William of Tyre.

Baldwin, however, refused to hide his disfigured face when he took his men into the field, and in 1177 he led only a few hundred knights to victory against a wave of several thousand Arabs just north of Jerusalem. Five years later, the Arabs managed to advance closer to Jerusalem by occupying Galilee in the north of what is now Israel. Baldwin moved once again to defend his city, but when he returned home, he collapsed.

It was time to find a replacement. The following year, the Patriarch of Jerusalem took the keys to the city and toured Europe in search of a new king, or at least more knights to defend the city. He returned empty handed. The lack of a strong leader caused division to spread in Jerusalem. The nobles quarrelled among themselves. The knightly orders became restive, and some of them even went so far as to fire arrows into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in anger at the patriarch.

Meanwhile, Saladin was preparing for a decisive attack against Jerusalem. The Holy City still shone, but its fate was now inexorably sealed. ■



TECHNOLOGY.....

CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

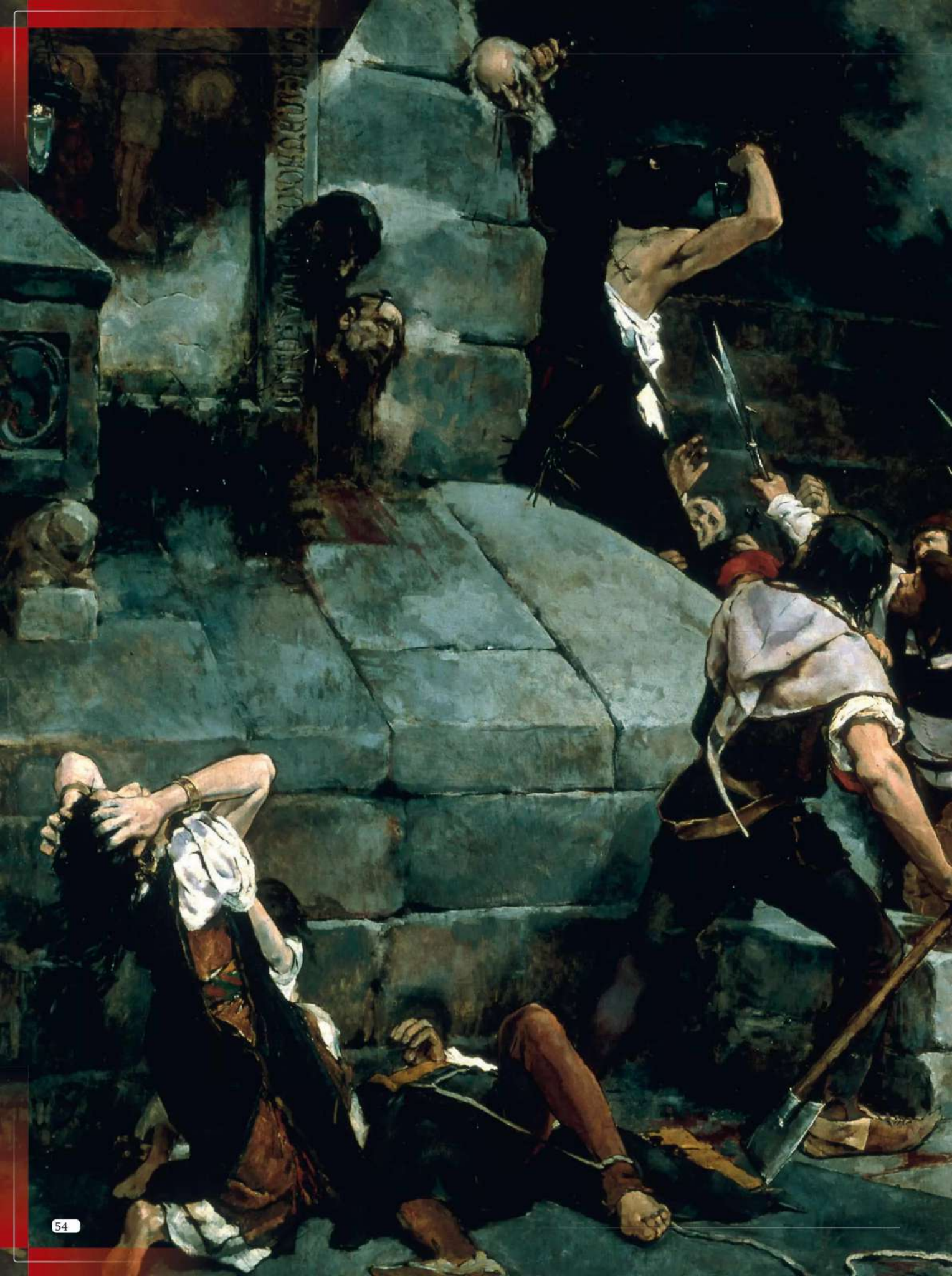
DAILY LIFE.....

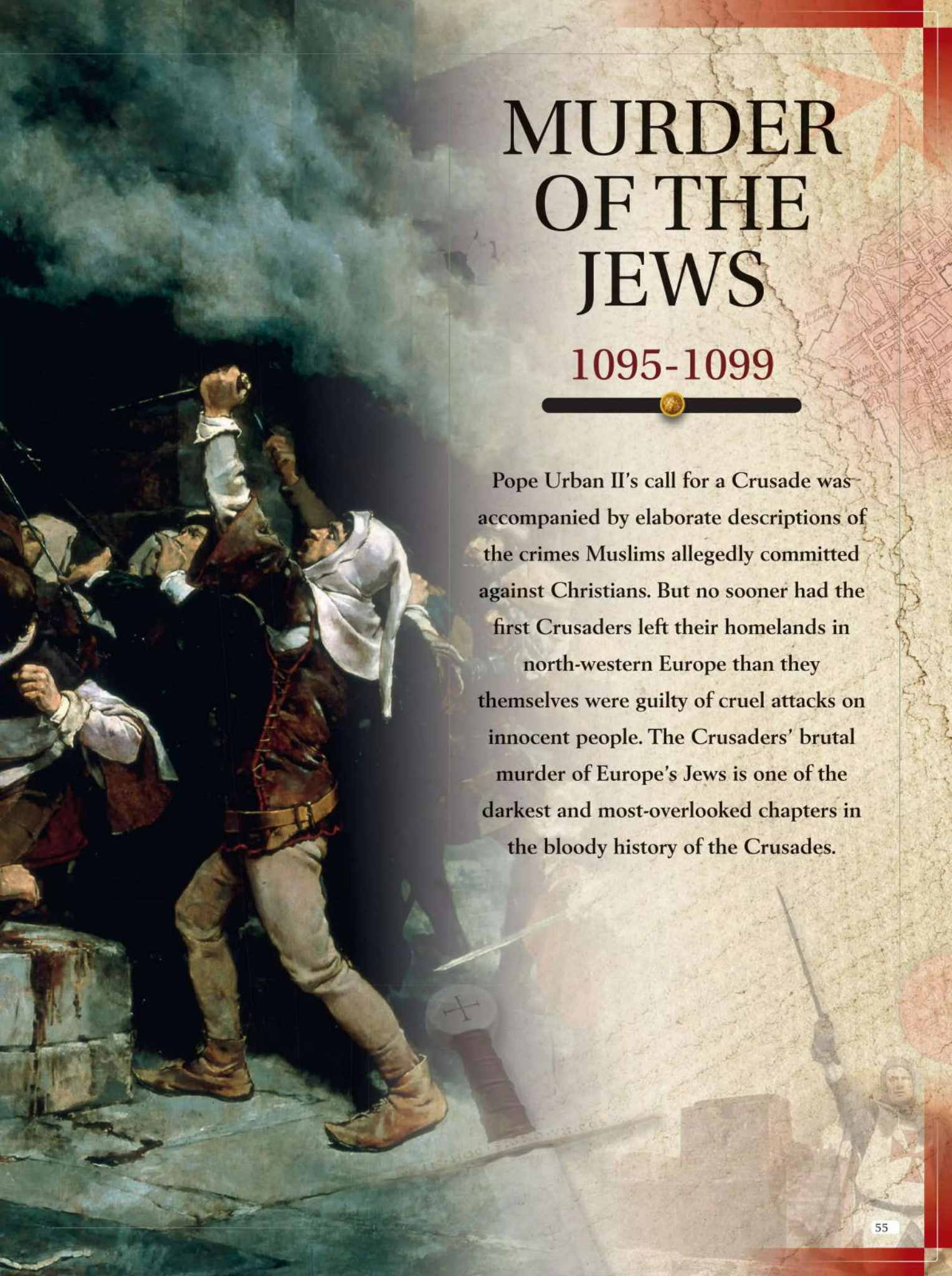
Ladder is symbol of divided church

According to the Status Quo order of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, nothing in the common areas may be touched. The rule has led to the crazy situation in which a ladder left by workmen over the entrance before 1853 has

been there ever since. This is because if anyone touches it, it automatically implies they have ownership of the entrance, which no one wants. Known as the immovable ladder, it has become a symbol of the dispute.







MURDER OF THE JEWS

1095-1099

Pope Urban II's call for a Crusade was accompanied by elaborate descriptions of the crimes Muslims allegedly committed against Christians. But no sooner had the first Crusaders left their homelands in north-western Europe than they themselves were guilty of cruel attacks on innocent people. The Crusaders' brutal murder of Europe's Jews is one of the darkest and most-overlooked chapters in the bloody history of the Crusades.

1095-99

1095 Pope Urban II calls for a Crusade, and lay preacher Peter the Hermit starts to gather the People's Crusade.

1096 Crusaders' attempt to forcibly baptise Jews in Rouen prompts French Jews to warn their German counterparts.

1096 Members of People's Crusade commit violent attacks on Jews in the Rhineland.

1096 Hungary's king goes to battle against the Crusaders and temporarily halts their rampage.

1099 The Christian conquerors attack the Jews of Jerusalem.

1095 >>

1096 >>

1099 >>

At the start of 1096, disturbing news reached the Jewish population of the German Rhineland. Letters and visitors unanimously reported that French Christians were mobilising a campaign to drive the Muslims from Jerusalem and the Holy Land. The volunteers were inflamed by a great hatred, not only of Muslims, but of all other faiths. The Jews of Rouen had suffered the consequences when a group of Christians forced them into a church where they were given the choice of being baptised or killed. The German Jews had better be prepared because something awful was afoot, warned the French Jews.

Horrified, many German Jews devoted themselves to prayer and fasting, says the *Mainz Anonymous*, an almost contemporaneous chronicle written in Hebrew by an unknown author. After that, German Jews could only hope for the best.

"We have done our part. May God save us and save you," the German Jews wrote back to their French friends.

BISHOP BANNED MIXED MARRIAGE

Persecution was nothing new for Europe's Jews at the end of the eleventh century. Mass expulsions and forced conversions had been part of everyday life from as early as the seventh century, and since then there had been numerous waves of Jewish persecution. In the city of Metz in north-eastern France, the otherwise friendly relations between Jews and Christians were severed in 888 by an ecclesiastical decree forbidding the two groups to eat together or

marry each other. In the German city of Trier in 1066, Jews were ordered by the archbishop to convert before Easter – an order that was never carried out, as the bishop was murdered beforehand.

Early pogroms like these, however, had always been limited in scope and duration. As a rule, the atmosphere of hatred quickly died down and Christians and Jews resumed peaceful relations.

NOT CONSIDERED PROPER PEOPLE

Persecution could not prevent Europe's Jewish populations from growing, even after the Crusades.

The persecution of Jews during the Crusades, on the other hand, was to be far more gruesome. Men, women and children were forced to be baptised – or were beheaded, impaled or burned alive. Thousands lost their lives in what some historians have called the first Holocaust.

When Pope Urban II called for a Crusade against the Muslims in November 1095, he opened the floodgates of hatred. In the eyes of many Europeans, the Pope's call justified any action against what the Church called infidels – no matter how cruel. At a time when religion was central to how people saw themselves and their role in the world, the Pope's appeal to kill the enemies of Christianity made a powerful impression. Nothing could be more important than defending Christianity's teachings, and the battle was for eternal life.

The Pope's speeches made it clear that only Christians should be considered proper people. He even called the Muslims "a race alien to God" and an "evil race". The Christian entreaty to love your neighbour therefore didn't apply. Someone of a different faith could not be described

In the northern French city of Metz, the pogroms against the Jews were so violent that the Crusaders almost exterminated the city's entire Jewish population. It was excessive even compared to other attacks of the day.



as a neighbour, so hatred was allowed to run riot.

It wasn't a huge leap to go from regarding Muslims as subhuman to including Jews in the group of unbelievers who could be murdered with a clear conscience. Anti-Semitism had long flourished in Europe, and seen through the eyes of many Christians, the Jews were at least as godless as the Muslims. After all, they had denied Jesus when he was alive, and it was believed that the Jews had been responsible for Christ's death on the cross.

JESUS'S DEATH WAS TO BE AVENGED

To many Europeans, it was logical that the Jews had to be fought before the Muslims. From the outset, this view enjoyed support from the top of the crusading hierarchy. Godefroy of Bouillon, one of the Crusade's most important leaders and later the first ruler of Christian Jerusalem, vowed "to set out on this journey only after avenging the

TECHNOLOGY.....

CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

DAILY LIFE.....



Christians stole trade from Jews

Before the Crusades, Jews had virtually monopolised the import of silk, spices, gems and cloth from the East. The Crusades meant increased demand from Europeans, who, thanks to returning Crusaders, acquired a taste for the

exotic goods. This gave Christian merchants room to enter the market. Soon they outcompeted the Jews, helped by laws that prevented Jews from trading on equal terms with Christians – or from trading at all.

“Thousands lost their lives in what some historians have called the first Holocaust”



blood of the crucified one by shedding Jewish blood and completely eradicating any trace of those bearing the name 'Jew'. The Benedictine monk Sigebert of Gembloux agreed: before a war on behalf of the Lord could take place, the Jews had to convert. Those who resisted were to be "deprived of their goods, massacred and expelled from the cities", he declared.

The threat to strip Jews of their property didn't come out of nowhere. Many Crusaders had borrowed money from Jews. In the early Middle Ages, the Jews had a monopoly on charging interest, which the Church forbade Christians to do. So, by raiding the Jews, the Crusaders could kill two birds with one stone: they could eliminate their debts and enact God's will by killing or forcibly converting the infidels.

JEWS ASKED EMPEROR FOR HELP

Godefroy of Bouillon's anti-Jewish declaration soon reached the leader of the

Jewish population in the German city of Mainz, Kalonymus ben Meshullam. He took the matter to the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, and Godefroy was obliged to explain himself. The French duke claimed his words were not meant to be taken literally.

The Jews of Mainz and Cologne, however, were not convinced, so as

Lay preacher Peter the Hermit rallied a mob that went on a rampage against Europe's Jews.

>>>>

“Jews were killed like oxen and dragged through marketplaces and streets”

>>>> Godefroy and his Crusaders approached, the Jewish population arranged for a collection of 500 silver marks to be sent to the Crusaders. That way, they avoided being attacked and baptised by force.

Few Jews who came into contact with the Crusaders got off that easily. Particularly unfortunate were those who were exposed to the religious fanaticism of the members of the People's Crusade.

Unlike the Crusade proper, which was organised by the Pope, the units of the People's Crusade formed spontaneously. Most were peasants, people who owned no land, and even women and children stirred up by religious hatred. But the military leaders were knights, many from distinguished families, and as several were both war-trained and wealthy: the People's Crusade constituted a formidable force.

Many of the volunteers were inspired by the lay preachers who wandered the land. Deeply moved by the Pope's call to Crusade, these preachers saw it as their duty to spread the message of holy war, each in their own way. One of the most

influential preachers of the time was the Frenchman Peter the Hermit, whom sources describe as something of a maverick. He always went barefoot, rarely washed and lived on fish and wine. Despite his oddities, he attracted people from near and far “partly because of his reputation, partly because of his preaching”, and soon managed to gather a very large army, according to the chronicler Albert of Aachen. Peter the Hermit became the spiritual leader of the People's Crusade, comprising some 15,000 individuals, which set out from Cologne in the spring of 1096 to liberate Holy Jerusalem.

JEWS PAID TO AVOID ABUSE

On the great rivers of the Rhine and Moselle, many Jewish merchants had made good money trading with the East. By the time the Crusaders reached the region, their supplies were running low, so they set about blackmailing the Jews. Provided with a letter from a group of French Jews urging the residents to give the Crusaders supplies for the journey, Peter the Hermit arrived at

Trier's city gate. The citizens, however, had heard about the Crusaders' behaviour in France, so they had no desire to make further acquaintance with Peter or his entourage. In haste, sacks of food and other necessities were filled and carried to the city gate and the hungry Crusaders.

Peter himself, as far as is known, never expressed any hostility towards Jews. But, unfortunately for the Jews, the eccentric and charismatic preacher did not have the same impact as a military leader as he did as a speaker. Many Crusaders had run up huge debts to afford the journey and were keen to get their hands on Jewish fortunes, and it was impossible for Peter to control the many different groups of Crusaders his sermons had inspired.

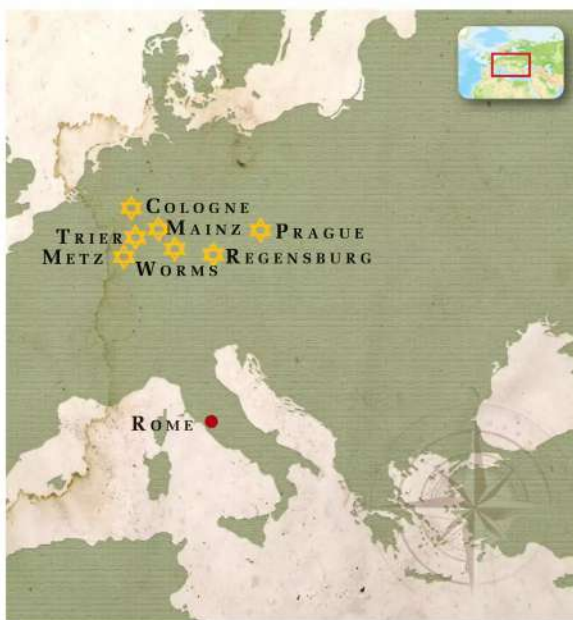
JEWS DRAGGED THROUGH STREETS

Leading the fight against the Jews was the German Count Emicho of Leiningen, who had a reputation as a bully. His entourage included aristocrats, peasants and paupers from France, Flanders, Lorraine and England. A Jewish eyewitness explained that his acquaintances had been assaulted by “both princes and common folk [who] placed an evil sign upon their garments, a cross, and helmets on their heads”. The Crusaders were, wrote contemporary Jewish historian Eliezar ben Nathan, “cruel foreigners, fierce and swift, Frenchmen and Germans ... who put crosses on their clothing and were more plentiful than locusts on the face of the Earth”.

Emicho and his followers kicked off their atrocities in the Rhineland in May 1096. First, they pounced on Emicho's home town of Speyer, but had to give up

CRUSADERS' POGROMS AGAINST EUROPE'S JEWS IN 1096

■ Jewish communities in Rhineland towns, in particular, were met by gangs of bloodthirsty Crusaders, but Jews further east, in Prague and Regensburg, also felt the hatred of Christians. Confronted with the violent Crusaders, many Jews chose to convert to Christianity and thus save their lives – although the majority probably reverted to their old faith as soon as the Crusaders moved on. Other Jews sought the protection of local bishops, fled, fought back or took their own lives.



“THE FIRST HOLOCAUST”

★ Cities where Christian Crusaders committed atrocities against Jews.



when the town's bishop protected the Jews. Frustrated, Emicho led his men to Worms, where he arrived on 18th May 1096.

The town's Jews had previously heard how those in Speyer had been helped by the local bishop. Many of Worms's Jews, therefore, sought out the city's bishopric in the hope of receiving the same protection. And just as in Speyer, the bishop of Worms opened his doors to a group of terrified Jews who, from the safety of the bishop's chambers, watched in horror as other Jews in the city were "killed like oxen and were dragged through the marketplaces and streets like sheep to the slaughter", the *Mainz Anonymous* tells us.

Before long, however, the bishop's palace was surrounded by Emicho's forces, who began pounding on the doors. Eventually, the furious mob broke through and poured in. A bloodbath ensued. Some of the Christians simply cut down the Jews without mercy, but most first tried to make them convert to Christianity. The methods, however, were unusually harsh, as the fate of the Jew Isaac of Worms demonstrates:

"They put a rope around his neck and dragged him throughout the entire city, through the mud of the streets, up to the place of their idolatry. His soul was still bound up in his body. They said to him: 'You may still be saved. Do you wish to convert?' He signalled with his finger – for he was unable to utter a word with his mouth, for he had been strangled – saying:

In the German city of Speyer, the bishop managed to protect the Jews from the bloodthirsty Crusaders.

JEWS FORCED TO WEAR YELLOW TURBANS

In Spain, too, the Jewish population was threatened by religious fanaticism. The Muslim rulers of the Iberian Peninsula had long left the Jews alone, but when the fundamentalist Almoravid dynasty took power in 1055, the situation changed. Jews were forced to wear a yellow turban so they could be recognised, and several Jews were killed in local anti-Semitic riots. Systematic persecution of Jews, however, came only when Christian rulers – notably the Catholic royal couple Isabella and Ferdinand – seized power and later united Spain in 1479.



'Cut off my head!' They severed his neck," the *Mainz Anonymous* relates.

MOTHERS KILLED THEIR CHILDREN

Faced with the choice of converting or dying, many Jews chose to take their own lives – a difficult decision, because suicide was a serious sin under Jewish law. Many even killed their children to spare them the humiliation and cruel death that the

fanatical Christians threatened to inflict upon them. By 20th May, the Jewish population of Worms was all but wiped out.

Emicho continued his deadly march unabated. After five days, his army reached Mainz. Here, too, the Jews sought protection from the local archbishop, who, according to the chronicler Albert of



EYEWITNESS

MAINZ ANONYMOUS / *Unknown Jew, c. 1096*JEWS CHOSE DEATH
OVER CONVERSION

“There was a certain man, named Moses ben Helbo. He called to his sons and said to them: ‘My sons Simon and Helbo. At this moment hell and paradise are open [before you]. Into which do you wish to enter?’ They answered him and said: ‘Bring us into paradise.’ They stretched forth their necks. The enemy smote them, father with sons.”

>>>> Aachen, was persuaded to accept “an incredible amount of money”. Despite the payment, however, the bishop did little to protect the Jews when Emicho and his cronies arrived at the bishop’s door.

“Breaking the bolts and doors, they killed the Jews, about 700 in number, who in vain resisted the force and attack of so many thousands. They killed the women, also, and with their swords pierced tender children of whatever age and sex ...

Horrible to say, mothers cut the throats of nursing children with knives and stabbed others, preferring them to perish thus by their own hands,” a clearly shocked Albert of Aachen wrote of the atrocities in Mainz.

Among the Jews in Mainz who took their own lives was the leader of the Jewish community, Kalonymus ben Meshullam.

POPE DID NOTHING

During the massacre, several members of Mainz’s merchant bourgeoisie tried to help the Jews, with whom they worked on a daily basis, but just as many sided with the Crusaders. In Mainz, as in other cities

where Jews were attacked, the local population, who had hitherto lived peacefully side by side with their Jewish neighbours, took the opportunity to join in the atrocities, motivated by a thirst for revenge and envy, or simply carried away by bloodlust.

Both churchmen and royalty complained about the Crusade, but their protests were to no avail. Few were willing to stand up to a thousand-strong, well-armed and belligerent army – and if they did, the soldiers would be long gone before a trial could be staged. Not even threats of excommunication had any effect on the Crusaders, and the ultimatums were never followed through. Pope Urban II, who could have lent weight to the protests of local churchmen with a papal condemnation, reacted to the persecution of the Jews with a deafening silence. With hundreds and perhaps even thousands of Jewish lives on their conscience, the Crusaders were allowed to continue unhindered.

BURNED TO DEATH IN SYNAGOGUE

The Crusaders’ route passed through southern Germany and along the River Danube towards newly Christianised Hungary. In the Bavarian town of Regensburg, all the Jews were thrown into the river and baptised. As unpleasant and offensive as the experience was, it had little impact on the Jewish community. As soon as the Crusaders were out of sight, the Jews resumed their old faith and its rituals.

Finally, in June 1096, the first group of Crusaders arrived in Hungary, where they were welcomed by King Coloman. The Crusaders promised to pass through the country peacefully and to pay for food,

lodging and other necessities – but the promises soon proved empty. After a few days, the Crusaders fell into a drunken stupor and began to plunder the population for wine, grain and other essentials. Soon they were destroying fields and slaughtering cattle and sheep. Anyone who tried to reason with the Christian warriors was killed. But when a group of Crusaders captured a young Hungarian, drove a stake through his body and put him on display in the marketplace of Wieselburg in present-day Austria, it was too much. The king ordered his subjects to resist, and all the Crusaders were driven out or killed, leaving the plain “covered with corpses and blood”, wrote Albert of Aachen.

When Emicho and his entourage

reached Hungary, they were refused entry. Some of the German count’s people later joined the official Crusade, sanctioned by the Pope. Others – including Count Emicho – quietly sneaked back home.

Meanwhile, the rest of the People’s Crusade carried on to Constantinople and through

Anatolia, where they continued their rampage. In mid-October, however, the adventure came to an abrupt end when the Crusaders were spotted by a Muslim army, which trapped them in the fortress they had just been sacking. The Crusaders spent eight days there without food or water before being killed or captured.

HATRED OF JEWS LIVED ON

The sudden end of the People’s Crusade did not mean that the persecution of the Jews was over. When the official Crusader army captured Jerusalem in July 1099, Jews sought protection in the synagogue, but the Crusaders showed no mercy either to the Jews or to their shrines:

“The Jews assembled in the synagogue, and the Franks burned it over their heads ... and they destroyed ... the tomb of Abraham,” wrote the Muslim historian Ibn Al-Qalanisi. Those Jews who could not be ransomed and exiled were either baptised against their will or killed.

In Europe, too, persecution of the Jews continued. Throughout the Middle Ages, Jews were driven from their homes, burned at the stake or forced to wear special hats and bells that made them stand out from the crowd. Right up to the present day, anti-Semitism has continued to bubble up in Europe, with the Nazi extermination of the Jews just the most recent episode of the atrocities they have endured. ■

The anti-Semitic image Judensau (Jewish sow) shows Jewish children suckling from a sow – a violent insult to Jews, who consider pigs unclean and therefore do not eat pork.





According to myths of the Middle Ages, Jews performed mystical rituals in which they murdered Christian children.







KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

1119-1314

In 1119, nine knights formed a private guard of warrior monks to protect pilgrims on their way to the Holy City. The Templars' combination of weaponry and devotion to God appealed to both kings and the Church, and their reputation and organisation grew rapidly. After only half a century, they were feted as elite forces and royal advisers but remained shrouded in a mystique that was at once both pious and dangerous.

1119-1314

1119 Hugues de Payens founds the Templar order in Jerusalem.

1127-28 Hugues secures support of the church and nobility on a European tour.

1139 Pope Innocent II grants the knights special status and exempts them from criminal liability.

1307 King Philip IV of France orders the arrest of all Templar knights in France.

1312 Pope Clement V succumbs to pressure and bans the order.

1314 The last Grand Master is burnt as a heretic.

1119 >>> 1127 >>> 1139 >>> 1307 >>> 1312 >>> 1314 >>>

In the late afternoon of 18th March 1314, the citizens of Paris witnessed one of the cruellest scenes of the Middle Ages. On the Île aux Juifs – an island in the Seine – two men were burned as heretics. As the fire engulfed their bodies, one shouted loudly and clearly that he was innocent before dying with his hands stretched out towards Notre Dame Cathedral.

The execution of the Templar Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, and his closest aide marked the tragic end of the order's eventful history. During almost two centuries the order of warrior monks had celebrated triumphs so great that its dramatic fall would have been unthinkable only a few decades earlier.

The history of the Knights Templar began when two French knights in Jerusalem, Hugues de Payens and Geoffrey de Saint-Omer, decided to put an end to the many attacks and robberies that plagued Christian pilgrims on their journey to the Holy City. The year was 1119, Jerusalem was in Christian hands, and many knights and Crusaders had returned to Europe. There were only about 300 Christian knights and 2,000 foot soldiers left in the city – enough to keep order in the streets but not enough to patrol the roads outside the city walls. The area's volatile history and the young Crusader State's limited military strength made Jerusalem's

hinterland a haven for highwaymen, assassins and thieves. Unsavoury elements from both the Crusader and Muslim armies joined local bandits, feeding off the many Christian pilgrims who flocked to the area. The pilgrims – women, children and older men with bulging pockets and faraway looks in their eyes – were easy prey.

Hugues and Geoffrey persuaded seven other knights to help patrol the road between Jerusalem and the port at Jaffa that most of the pilgrims used.

Several such associations already existed in Europe, where some roads could be as unsafe as in the Middle East. Hugues and Geoffrey's group, however, differed from other knightly orders in one important respect: they were not just knights; they were monks. To join the order, a recruit had to promise to live like a monk – in "poverty, chastity and obedience" – an existence very different from that of most knights in the Holy Land, who were notorious for their dissolute lifestyle of fighting, whoring and drunkenness.

When Jerusalem's King Baldwin II heard of the pious knights, he was thrilled. According to legend, the king even summoned Hugues and Geoffrey on Christmas Day 1119 so that the two knights could take their holy vows as warrior



The Knights Templar were not the only knights fighting to keep the Holy Land in Christian hands. For centuries, the black-clad knights of the Order of St John were a formidable force.

monks. Baldwin certainly gave the order his full support and gave them part of the al-Aqsa Mosque, located on Temple Mount – one of the holiest sites in both Judaism and Islam. The Crusaders, who refused to recognise Jerusalem's importance to the Muslims, stubbornly called the mosque the Temple of King Solomon, despite it being constructed as a Muslim shrine and having nothing to do with the Bible's Jewish king.

The new headquarters inspired Hugues and Geoffrey to name their order the Poor Knights of Christ and Solomon's Temple

KNIGHTS WERE GOVERNED BY ARISTOCRATS

Founded by French knights, the Templar order recruited leaders and supporters from the military aristocracy of Europe and the Holy Land's Crusader States throughout its lifetime.

HUGUES DE PAYENS ►

Circa 1070-1136

■ Hugues was a knight, believed to have been born in Champagne in northern France. He probably went to the Holy Land during the First Crusade, but the particulars of his history are unknown. In 1119 he founded the Order of the Knights Templar, of which he was Grand Master until his death almost 20 years later. Hugues also helped write the order's rules and founded its first chapters in London and Edinburgh.



GODFREY DE SAINT-OMER

Unknown, lived c. 1120

■ Godfrey was of Flemish descent and probably came to Jerusalem with the First Crusade. Historians know very little about him, but he was certainly with Hugues de Payens when the Order of the Knights Templar was founded in Jerusalem. Legend has it that he and Hugues were so poor at the beginning that they owned only one horse between them – which is supposedly why the Order later used a seal depicting two riders on the same horse.

The last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay, called out from the pyre to pronounce a curse on his killers – the Pope and the King of France

– known colloquially as the Knights Templar or just Templars. The mosque housed the knights and provided offices where they could administer the order's finances and staff. The lower level was used as stables.

The sight of knights on horseback, barrelling down from the Temple Mount and through the narrow city streets, became familiar in Christian Jerusalem for many years to come.

KNIGHTS SOLD PACKAGE TOURS

The enterprising knights quickly supplemented their initial patrol operation with the launch of what we would call a travel agency. They used their knowledge of travelling to and from the Holy Land to arrange pilgrims' itineraries, including the sea voyage, accommodation in Jerusalem and a guide to show them the city's holy sites. The Knights Templar also set up a banking service where pilgrims could deposit their valuables with the Knights Templar near their point of departure and then withdraw regular sums from that amount during their journey as they passed by other Templar outposts.

Word of the enterprising knights spread quickly and attracted scores of recruits. When Payens sailed for Europe in 1125, he had enough men to take a small force with him without compromising security in the Holy Land.

King Baldwin funded Hugues' trip to Europe. This was because one of Hugues' tasks was to arrange the king's diplomatic affairs. He also had to ensure that the Knights Templar received official approval from the Church.

For two years, Hugues travelled around England and France, where he received a



▲ **KING FULK OF JERUSALEM**

1095-1143

■ Before marrying into the throne of Jerusalem, French Count Fulk forged links with the Templars, whom he met in the Holy Land in 1120. The Templars made Fulk an honorary member of the order to help strengthen their European ties.

BERTRAND DE BLANCHFORT

Circa 1109-1169

■ Bertrand was probably of south-western French noble lineage. As Grand Master, he emphasised that the knights should be honourable guardians of the holy sites rather than soldiers. He strove for peaceful solutions both within the order and without. He negotiated peace with Egypt.



GUILLAUME DE BEAUJEU

Circa 1230-1291

■ Guillaume came from a French family with ties to the royal family. As Grand Master, he defended Acre during the siege of 1289–1291. When the attackers broke through the city walls, he threw himself into the fight – without his armour. He was soon mortally wounded and staggered away from the battlefield, reportedly shouting, "I will not retreat! I am dead!" Making it clear that even at the end, he was chiefly concerned with obeying the order's rules of never withdrawing from battle.

JACQUES DE MOLAY ►

Circa 1243-1314

■ Jacques's background is unclear, but he entered the order as a young Frenchman at the age of 21 in 1265. Around 1298 he became Grand Master – the last, as it turned out. On 13 October 1307, he was arrested in King Philip's purge of the Templars. At first, Jacques confessed under torture to the many charges against the order, but later retracted his confession. He was burned as a heretic on 18 March 1314.



“Any contact with women was forbidden”

warm reception from both the nobility and leading Catholics. The news of the pious knights defending Christianity's holiest sites aroused great enthusiasm, and counts and barons were ready to donate money and land to the order. Hugues was even invited to a royal wedding in London.

The abbot Bernard de Clairvaux also took Hugues under his wing. Bernard was the Church's greatest thinker and head of the Cistercian Order, which he had made one of the world's most powerful monastic groups. In 1128, the enterprising church father took the Templars' cause to a council of high churchmen in Troyes, France. Bernard provided the crucial arguments for the knights' use of violence in the name of God and arranged for Hugues himself to present the knights' case to the distinguished bishops and churchmen. The

order immediately received the approval of the Catholic Church, and after the meeting, Bernard personally set down the main rules of the Order of the Knights Templar.

BASTARDS WERE NOT ALLOWED

Hugues had every reason to be pleased when he set sail for the Holy Land. The Knights Templar had the blessing of the Catholic Church's highest office, gifts of money and property were pouring in, and in the Holy Land, banking was bringing in good revenues. Men flocked to become knights from the Crusader States and Europe, and the order could pick and choose among the potential recruits.

From the beginning, the Templars set high standards. Only men whose fathers and grandfathers had been knights could

Templars in battle could only retreat if their opponents on the battlefield outnumbered them by at least three to one.



Count Thierry of Flanders was one of the many European nobles who donated money or land to the Templars to support their cause. He made a bequest in 1128.

don the coveted white surcoat and red cross of the Templars. Less distinguished recruits could occupy subordinate positions, becoming squires to the knights, but the requirements for these positions were almost as rigorous. For example, no one born out of wedlock could apply.

A life of poverty and hard work awaited those who made it through selection. The day began at 06.00 when everyone was called to morning mass. Hours of work followed, including maintenance and repair of harnesses, weapons and other military equipment. This was interrupted by prayers at 09.00, then resumed until around noon, when the first meal of the day, lunch, was served. In the afternoon, the knights gathered again for prayer at 15.00 and 18.00, after which they were served supper. Meat only appeared on the sparse menu three times a week, and two knights had to share a single plate. All talk at the table was strictly forbidden. During the meal, one of the order's priests read from the Bible.

The knights gathered again at nightfall. They had a drink and were then forbidden to talk for the rest of the evening. The "great silence" lasted until morning mass. The sleep of the knights, on the other hand, did not. Halfway through the night, they had to get up to pray – in silence – and then check on their horses. Once a knight was satisfied that all was well, he could go to bed and sleep until morning. The knight's bed consisted of a hard mattress, a pillow and a single woollen blanket. He slept fully clothed, including his boots.

Many rules of conduct further reined in the knights' tightly scheduled daily life. Even outside the Great Silence, talk was to

be kept to a minimum – "to talk too much is not without sin", the rules admonished, and so "idle words and wicked bursts of laughter" were therefore strictly forbidden.

While the order amassed enormous sums, individual knights could own nothing but their weapons and clothes. A knight was not even permitted to keep letters from his family – they were read out by one of the leaders instead.

Any sign of vanity or individual styling was banned. Neither horses nor harnesses could be adorned, let alone decorated with the small silver or gold pendants that were popular among the Crusaders. Nor could a Templar have hobbies, such as falconry – a great fashion among knights in the Christian Crusader States at the time.

WOMEN WERE DANGEROUS

Any contact with women was forbidden. A Templar was not even allowed to kiss his mother or sister. No matter who she was, just touching a woman was "a dangerous thing". When the knights went to bed at night, they had to leave the lights on "so that the dark enemy does not give them reason for sin", as the rules put it.

For the knight caught having had sexual intercourse with a woman, the most severe punishment of the order awaited: he lost his knight's robes, was dragged around in

chains as an example to others and then expelled from the order forever.

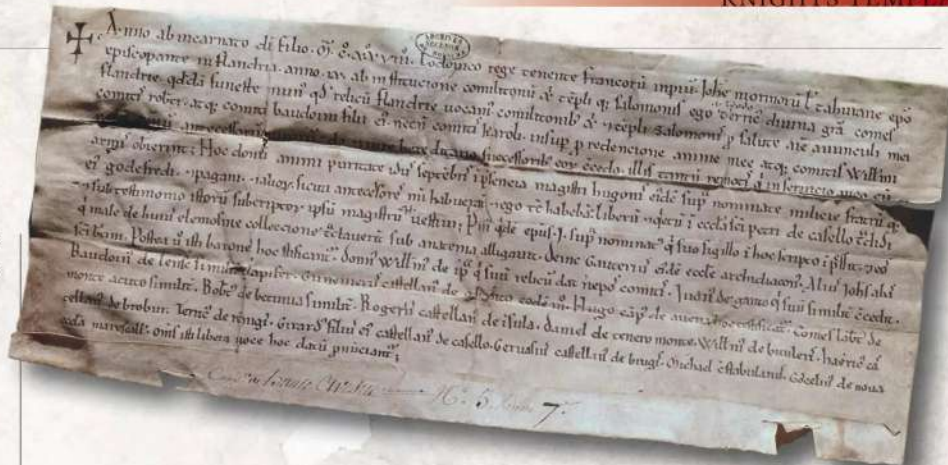
KNIGHTS WERE UNTOUCHABLE

The order grew steadily while the individual knights were kept on a tight leash. With income from land and banking, the Knights Templar built a series of fortresses that came to encircle the Crusader States. The order developed into a task force, which could be deployed to defend Christian possessions in and around the Holy Land.

The Order always expected its knights to fight to the last man in battle. At no time were they allowed to withdraw, not even to reorganise their forces. The only valid reason for retreating from a fight was when the Crusaders were outnumbered by at least three to one.

In addition to their military duty, the knights also acted as advisors. After many years in the Middle East, they had an extremely good knowledge of Islam and Muslim customs, and some of them even spoke Arabic and had close friends who were Muslim. For the kingdom of Jerusalem in particular, the Templars' knowledge was useful when it came to getting along with neighbouring Muslim states – or beating them in battle.

Newcomers to the Holy Land – be they bishops, kings, counts or simple pilgrims – also went to the Temple on the Mount to meet the Grand Master of the Order to seek



10 knights were required when the Knights Templar escorted what they believed was a splinter from Jesus's cross.

The Knights Templar built several defences – including Castelo de Almourol in Portugal.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX AIDED THE TEMPLAR CAUSE

In 1127, the Templar Grand Master Hugues de Payens received support from the Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux during his journey to France and England. The abbot was known as the "honey-

tongued doctor" because of his oratory skills. He promoted the Knights' cause wherever he went. Bernard's praises brought knights, land, money and ecclesiastical benevolence to the Knights Templar.

DECISIVE MOMENTS



his analysis of recent developments in the region. In return, the Knights Templar's service to the Christian world was richly rewarded: in 1139, Pope Innocent II declared in a bull – an official and sealed letter – that the Order of the Knights Templar was virtually untouchable; the Knights were answerable only to the Pope and could not be prosecuted by any earthly power.

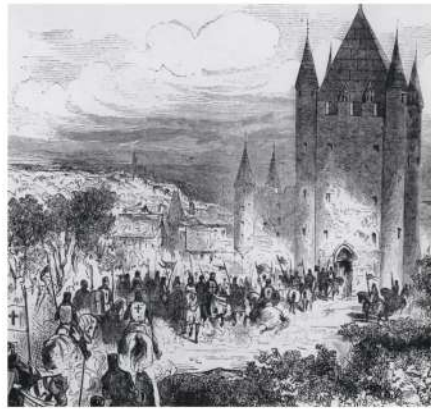
For a time, everything the Templars touched seemed to turn to gold. Even the defeats that began to befall the Christian Crusader States initially brought prosperity to the Templars. New threats prompted the kings of Europe to organise new Crusades, and the waves of warriors and pilgrims provided good money for the Templars, who now had bank offices in several of Europe's major cities, such as London and Paris. Knights left their possessions at these offices while on Crusade in exchange for a note listing the value of the deposit; they could then withdraw money up to that sum from Templar offices along the way.

SALADIN BEAT THIRSTY KNIGHTS

It was not until the summer of 1187 that the Knights Templar encountered real problems. That was when the Great Arab commander Saladin, and his army of 25,000 men, began their victorious military campaign to capture Christian-held possessions in the Middle East.

When the Muslim warlord laid siege to the Fortress of Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee, the Templar Grand Master, Gérard de Ridefort, insisted on attacking immediately. There was no time to gather provisions and water, said Gérard, who also rejected any idea of attacking at night. So, on a hot day in July, the knights, weak from hunger and thirst after a long and punishing march, attacked.

The defeat that followed was total and humiliating, and Saladin subsequently beheaded every Templar he could get his hands on. The Arab warlord then took Jerusalem and made a fragile peace with the Europeans. For a few decades, the knights could still escort pilgrims to the holy city, but in the mid-thirteenth century, the downturn in the Templar knights'



From c. 1200, the Templars guarded the treasures of the French king in their fortress in the centre of Paris. The building later became a state prison.

fortunes began in earnest. Turks and Mongols poured in from the north, while Mamluks advanced from the south. In 1244, the Turks ravaged Jerusalem.

Acre became the knights' new headquarters, but in the following years, one Crusader stronghold after another fell – and in 1291, it was Acre's turn.

PURSUED BY PHILIP

The knights evacuated their valuables to Cyprus and tried to persuade the Pope and European kings to launch another Crusade, but the powers-that-be were not interested in another costly military adventure.

The immense wealth of the knights, on the other hand, was of great interest to France's unscrupulous King Philip IV. The king was heavily in debt and happy to use religious bigotry to amass the riches he needed. In 1306 he invented a pretext to expel all Jews from France so he could confiscate their possessions. Now, he turned his attention to the Templars.

He put his plan into action on Friday, 13th October 1307. Throughout France, Templars were arrested, beaten and tortured on trumped-up charges. The knights' immense power and wealth were

well known, and their order's activities were shrouded in mystery, all of which Philip exploited to the full by spreading rumours of heresy and other crimes.

Soon, the streets of Paris and other major cities were buzzing with scandalous tales of the knights' affairs. They were not at all the pious men they claimed to be, the rumours declared. They urinated and spat on the cross, and in their secret initiation rituals, they even denied the existence of God. Philip pointed out that all the Templars' meetings were held at night or in the dark, so no one could see what they were worshipping. He claimed that their real god was not the Christian God but an idol called Baphomet. No one knew who and what Baphomet was, but some among the tortured knights had confessed to worshipping a hanged cat and the mummified head of John the Baptist.

At the same time, rumours began to spread about the knights' close relationship with the Muslims, and they were accused of colluding in the loss of the Holy Land.

POPE HAD TO YIELD

Under terrible torture ordered by Philip, the knights of France confessed one by one. Pope Clement V – formally the only one who could censure the knights – protested, and in other countries, the rulers refused to persecute the knights, as

Philip did. However, Clement owed his appointment as head of the church to Philip, so in 1312 the Pope succumbed and dissolved the order.

The end came on 4th July 1314, when Jacques de Molay was burnt at the stake. As the fire engulfed the dying Grand Master, he angrily shouted that King Philip and Pope Clement would meet him before the throne of God and be judged with him within a year. Both men, who were in their prime, died unexpectedly within a year – just as Molay had promised.

The two mysterious deaths helped fuel more myths about the Templars' secrets that later grew into European folklore. ■

Templar legacy
is still guarded today by the Catholic charity Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem.

In 1994, archaeologists discovered a tunnel under the ancient defences of the Israeli city of Acre. It was built by the Knights Templar in the late 12th century.

MYTHS STILL FLOURISH

The Templar Knights' rapid rise to power and subsequent fall following an unfair trial on charges cooked up by the King of France has given rise to numerous myths about their continued existence and allegedly mysterious activities.

THE TEMPLARS HID THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

■ **What:** Chest containing the Ten Commandments.

■ According to the Bible, Moses built the Ark of the Covenant to store the stone tablets engraved with the Ten Commandments. The ark was every Christian warrior's dream. Its power could part waters, blast its way through impenetrable terrain, kill snakes and scorpions and topple solid city walls. The ark itself disappeared from history when the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II sacked Jerusalem in 587 BC. But according to some legends, the Knights Templar found the Ark buried under their headquarters on the Temple Mount and took it to safety in France or Ethiopia. The ark is said to have helped the Knights Templar build the Obelisk of Axum, a stele monument carved from a single block of stone, which at almost 34 metres was the world's tallest monolith. However, the stories are a myth: the obelisk was built in the fourth century AD – 800 years before the Knights Templar were even formed.



Did the Templars hide the Ark of the Covenant? That's what myths claim.

IS IT THE TRUE SHROUD OF JESUS?

■ **What:** The sheet that wrapped the body of Christ.

■ The Turin Shroud, a cloth with the imprint of a man's body, is said to show Christ at the moment of resurrection. Its earliest history is unclear, but historians believe that in the mid-fourteenth century, it belonged to relatives of Geoffroi de Charney – the Templar who was burned at the stake in 1314 along with Grand Master Jacques de Molay. The wife of Geoffroi's

nephew may have been the first to display the shroud – in 1357. The connection has led some to claim that the Knights found the shroud under the Temple Mount, while others believe that the Knights Templar created the cloth. Science has never been able to determine the cloth's origin with certainty, but several disputed carbon-14 analyses in 1988 dated the fabric to between 1260 and 1390.



The Turin Shroud is one of the most famous relics of the Catholic Church.

THE SEARCH FOR THE HOLY GRAIL

■ **What:** The cup that Christ and his disciples drank from during the Last Supper.

■ Possibly inspired by the many cups of Celtic myth that were said to give a person supernatural powers or save lives, the cup of the Last Supper became the key to mystical communion with God in medieval legends. The powerful Knights Templar soon became part of this folklore. They appeared as guardians of the Grail throughout



the Middle Ages in the bardic verses and campfire stories that entertained everyday Europeans. Even today, certain Catholic orders hint that the Grail is in their possession. Proof, however, is nonexistent.

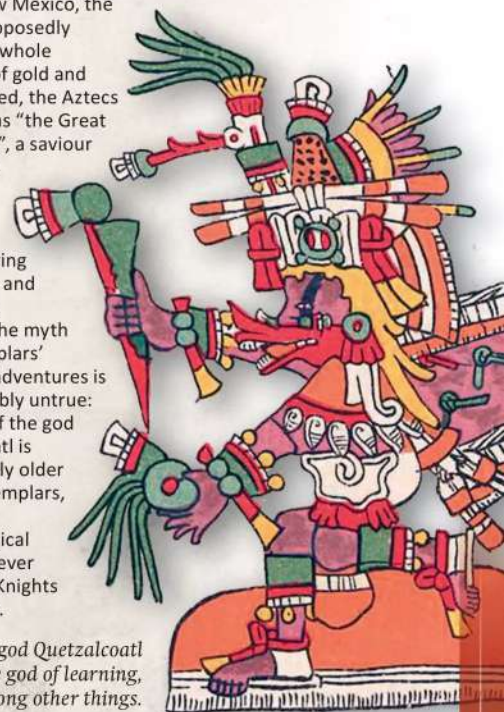
Medieval myths associated the Grail with divine power.

THE KNIGHTS DISCOVERED AMERICA

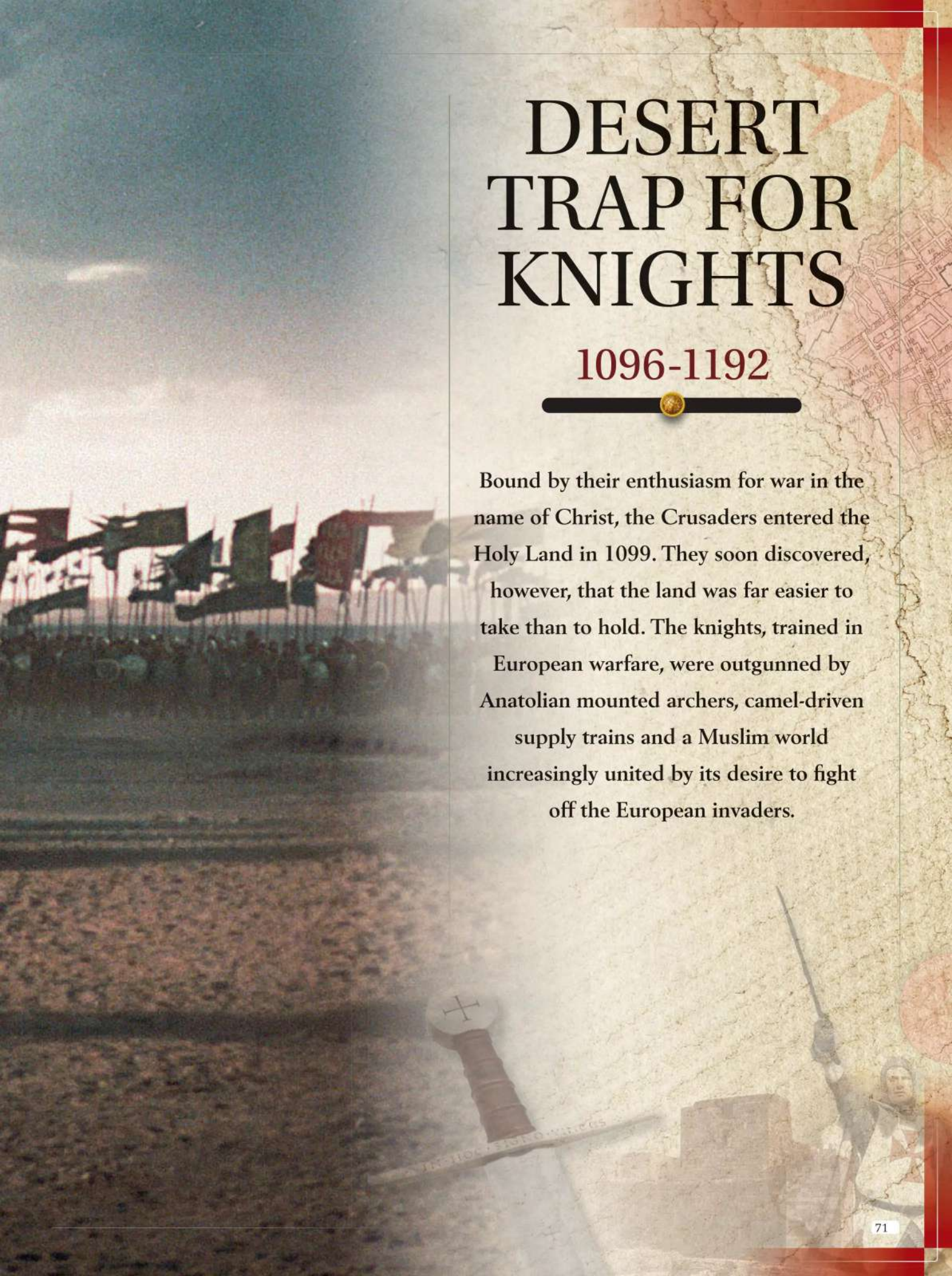
■ **What:** Aztec god Quetzalcoatl.

■ According to a persistent myth, the Knights Templar visited America more than 200 years before Columbus. In what is now Mexico, the Knights supposedly brought in whole shiploads of gold and silver. Indeed, the Aztecs saw them as "the Great White God", a saviour figure who would come from the east and bring knowledge and civilisation. However, the myth of the Templars' American adventures is demonstrably untrue: the story of the god Quetzalcoatl is considerably older than the Templars, and no archaeological finds have ever linked the Knights to America.

The Aztec god Quetzalcoatl was the god of learning, among other things.








DESERT TRAP FOR KNIGHTS

1096-1192



Bound by their enthusiasm for war in the name of Christ, the Crusaders entered the Holy Land in 1099. They soon discovered, however, that the land was far easier to take than to hold. The knights, trained in European warfare, were outgunned by Anatolian mounted archers, camel-driven supply trains and a Muslim world increasingly united by its desire to fight off the European invaders.

1096-1192

1096 A well-equipped army of Crusaders assembles in Constantinople.



1097 The Crusader army suffers its first defeat at Nicaea.

1098 Internal strife divides the emirs, and they lose at Antioch.

1144 The Muslims capture Edessa after 50 years of Crusader rule.

1187 Sultan Saladin defeats King Guy's army at the Horns of Hattin.

1192 Richard the Lionheart concludes a peace treaty with Saladin.

1096 >>> 1097 >>> 1098 >>> 1144 >>> 1187 >>> 1192 >>>

All was lost. Dizzy and gasping for air, Guy, king of the Holy City, defender of Christianity, sat in a tent in the middle of nowhere. His knights and footmen had been crushed or put to flight in the mountains around the village of Hattin in what is now part of Israel. The defeat on 4th July 1187 had been partly self-inflicted, for Guy's forces had not brought enough food or water for their expedition.

Without sufficient provisions, they were easy prey to Saladin's exhaustion strategy, and now a humiliated King Guy of Jerusalem sat in the Arab commander's tent. Saladin handed him a cup of cold water, which Guy drank eagerly. Like his kingdom, he now lived on borrowed time, at the mercy of the Arabs.

The defeat at Hattin was the most serious so far in a series of battles that would slowly but surely wrest the Holy Land from the Crusaders. More than a century had passed since the Crusaders first set out. Despite heavy losses, the initial conquest had been a success, for holy zeal had united the Crusaders to defeat a Muslim world weakened by internal strife with a single effort. Now the roles were reversed: the Christians were divided and the Muslims united in their own holy war under Saladin. When faced with a well-organised enemy, European war tactics and chivalric inventions were no longer enough to keep control of the Holy Land.

KNIGHTS IMPRESSED THE PRINCESS

In 1096, when the Crusaders gathered in the Byzantine Empire's magnificent capital of Constantinople, no one could have

foreseen a humiliation like that suffered by Guy 90 years later. The knights had radiated confidence as they trained for tournaments, their chain mail glistening in the sun. The group that set off for the Holy Land was a mixed bunch including children, women and old people, but the military core of the army was a force of knights both well equipped and well trained. Their chain mail remained the same type as used during Charlemagne's rule in the early years of the ninth century

The Holy Land, according to the Old Testament, is the land that God gave to Abraham and his descendants.

AD: small iron rings linked together to form a tunic that went down to the knees – a design that had proved its worth over time as protection against bladed weapons. The hauberk was accompanied by a hood, also made from iron rings, and attached to a helmet on which a piece of metal protruded over the nose. While the armour

was not new, the knights could shine with a fresh combat technique. Only 30 years earlier, when the Normans defeated the Anglo Saxons under Harold's kingship at the Battle of Hastings, the knights had thrown their lances at their opponents. French knights had subsequently placed the lance under their arm instead to use it as a kind of battering ram against enemy forces.

The knights and their lances were perfect for medieval warfare. Back home in Europe, when knights opened an attack against rival forces, they opened with close-packed *convois* formations – a group of 30–40 knights brandishing lances on horseback – against the enemy's foot soldiers who'd formed a defensive wall.

If they succeeded in scattering the enemy's footmen, the attackers deployed



Saladin's victory over King Guy prompted Richard I to go on crusade. After several battles, he and Saladin made peace in 1192.

their own foot soldiers, who together with the knights cut down the enemy one by one. Anna Komnene, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos and a keen chronicler, watched the Frankish knights and was impressed. The initial shock of such a lance attack was "irresistible", the princess wrote, adding that knights like these could "make a hole in the walls of Babylon".

ARCHERS FRIGHTENED THE KNIGHTS

The princess may have exaggerated slightly, but the Crusaders' new tactics were perfectly suited to fighting similar armies in Europe. The situation was different on the Anatolian plains, however. This soon became apparent when the Crusader army, supplied with provisions and other necessities from the Byzantine Emperor, and supremely confident of victory in the name of Jesus Christ, marched into the Holy Land in the spring of 1097.

The Muslim region – the Sultanate of Rum – was ruled over by Kilij Arslan, a member of the Seljuks, a Turkish tribe that had expanded into Arab territory. The sultan was no less confident of his own strength. The year before, he'd easily dispatched a ragtag Crusader army of peasants from Nicaea and so failed to appreciate that the second army landing on his shores would be more formidable.

Kilij Arslan was subsequently greatly surprised to discover that this new army had laid siege to the city of Nicaea, while he'd dealt with a minor territorial dispute to the east. Nicaea, defended by a Turkish garrison, was the sultan's capital and housed both his family and his treasury. Eventually, the Crusaders took the city, leaving Kilij Arslan determined to teach them a lesson they would not forget.

He would soon get his opportunity. A few months later, as the main Crusader army marched from Nicaea towards the Holy Land, it split in two. Historians don't know why this happened – possibly due to a

Guy laid his sword at the feet of Sultan Saladin, expecting to have his head cut off. Instead, he was offered a drink of cold water.

TECHNOLOGY

CULTURE

ECONOMY

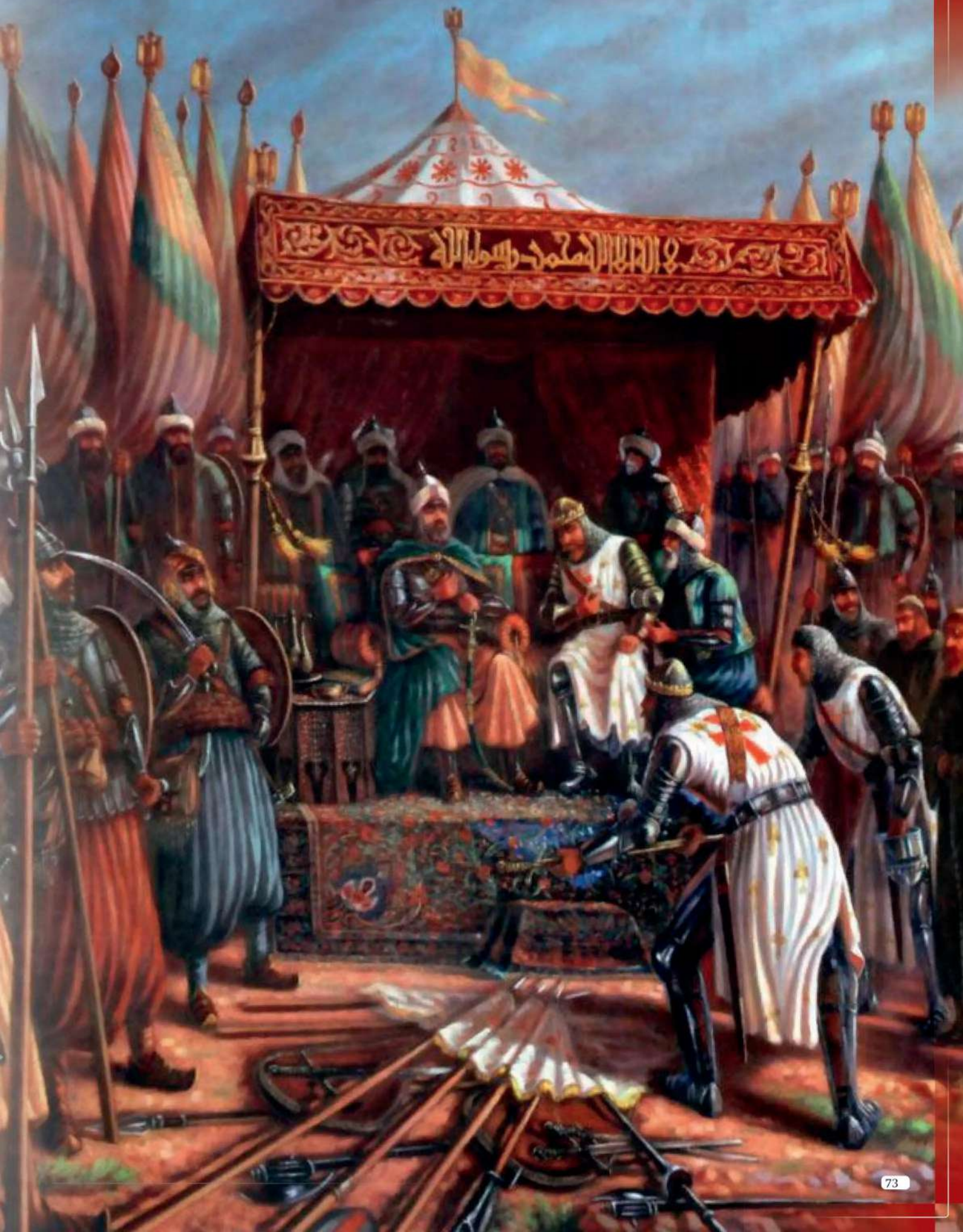
DAILY LIFE



Armour cost a small fortune

Chain mail armour was part of a knight's basic apparatus. It consisted of thousands of small iron rings set together in special patterns and reinforced with rivets, dipped in boiling oil to protect it from rust. While it offered effective protection

against stabbing, the armour was quite heavy – around 12 kg. And it wasn't cheap. It took several years for a blacksmith to make a single set of armour, and the cost could easily be the equivalent of a small aeroplane today.



“Suddenly arrows rained down on the unsuspecting Crusaders”

>>>> disagreement, or simply a means of gaining access to more supplies. Whatever the reason, the Italian Crusader Bohemond of Taranto had pulled his force slightly ahead of the others. On the morning of 1st July, all was peaceful in the camp. Some slept as others ate breakfast, when suddenly arrows rained down on the unsuspecting Crusaders. A force of some 30,000 Turks had surrounded the Christians and were now giving them a taste of one of the region's military specialities – archers on horseback.

A Crusader in Bohemond's army later related the Battle of Dorylaeum in the *Gesta Francorum*: “These Turks began, all at once, to howl and gabble and shout, saying with loud voices in their own language some devilish word which I do not understand. [Then they] came upon us from

all sides, skirmishing, throwing darts and javelins and shooting arrows from an astonishing range.”

Bohemond quickly gathered his closest Norman knights, whose experience and professionalism he hoped would soon put an end to the attacking Turks. “This day, if it please God, you will all have been made rich,” was the message among the men.

Bohemond quickly sent for help from the Crusaders' main army, then took up a defensive position while he waited. Repeatedly, knights in his army tried to break out and attack the archers in the same way they did in Europe. But instead of forming a solid, unified army like the Crusaders were used to, the Turks behaved like a stray swarm of bees. They popped up everywhere, firing arrows and hacking away with their swords.

The stunned Crusaders didn't know how to react. Some huddled together in small clusters, crying and praying. In the meantime, arrows “falling as thick as hail” claimed one victim after another. Some two thousand

Christians had already perished when help finally arrived several hours later. The main Christian force, around twice the size of the sultan's army, put the Turks to flight. The Crusaders were convinced that God had originally sent Kilij Arslan as punishment for their sins, but that they had finally been saved by the Almighty himself. Several certainly believed they had seen a knight in shining armour leading the relief force, and thought it must be none other than St George, the knights' saint and martyr.

Along with their belief in their own military capabilities, the unity that the commitment to holy war gave Christians was a major reason why the Crusader army succeeded in reaching Jerusalem. Equally important, however, was disunity within the Muslim world.

Their conflict stemmed from several factors, including a religious schism that had split Muslims into two camps: Sunni and Shia. Other problems were political or military in nature. Muslim armies were supplied to the Seljuks by emirs, local rulers who – like the European nobility – put their military abilities at the disposal of the local overlord in exchange for land.

The emirs were far from dependable, however, and often prioritised their own ambitions for land, titles and power over loyalty to their sultan.

EMIRS SNEAKED AWAY

This, according to some historians, benefited the Crusaders when, on a scorching summer's day in 1098, the knights found themselves besieged inside the walls of Antioch, having only just taken it after an eight-month siege.

Antioch's Muslim governor had dispatched messengers to Kerbogha, *atabeg*

THIRD CRUSADE KNIGHT

ONE-PIECE SUIT: the knight's armour evolved during the period. The chain mail grew to eventually cover the entire body from the head all the way to their fingers and down to their toes. Under the hauberk, the knight wore a leather jerkin. It was a heavy and hot outfit, effective against blades, but ineffective against blunt weapons. Standard weapons were a lance and a long, straight sword. The knight carried a large wooden shield with a tough leather covering hardened through boiling.

WEAPONS AND TACTICS

Longsword: wielded with both hands, it could chop off an opponent's head, arm or leg.

Lance: close-combat weapon, but long enough to knock the enemy from his horse.

Horses: strong and durable, but also heavily built and cumbersome on the battlefield.

Chain mail hauberk with long sleeves.

Lance was about 2.4 metres long.

Fully enclosed helmet made from iron plates.

The armour's sleeves extended to cover the entire hand with leather palms. A slit along the palm made it easier to pull the hand out of the sleeve.

A slit in the white surcoat made it easier to mount and dismount.

Chain mail leggings.

The shield was large and kite-shaped. It was made from wood and covered in a hard coat of boiled leather.

Sword (approx 80 cm blade and 20 cm handle).

The surcoat over the knight's iron breastplate was often decorated with a cross.

(governor) of Mosul, a city in present-day Iraq, who immediately set out, followed by his emirs. At first, the outlook appeared dire for the Crusaders. As Kerbogha's forces approached, they launched a traditional Muslim feint: a team of around 30 scouts advanced ahead towards the city, providing a target too tempting for Italian knight Roger of Barneville, who set out to defeat the small force with just 15 of his best men.

The Muslims turned and fled – pursued by an emboldened Roger, only to discover that he'd ridden into a trap. As soon as the knight's pursuit took him away from the safety of the city walls, Muslim soldiers poured out of a hidden valley. Panicked, Roger turned and rode back towards Antioch.

As he drew close to the city, his pursuers caught up with him: "In full view of all those who were standing around the ramparts the noble champion was beaten by a Turkish soldier on a faster horse. An arrow pierced his back and penetrated his liver and lung, and so he slipped from his horse and breathed his last," wrote chronicler Albert of Aachen.

As the Crusaders watched, Roger's body was decapitated, and his head placed on the tip of a Muslim spear as a victory trophy.

Kerbogha's triumph was short-lived, however, for when the Crusader army – half the size of Kerbogha's forces – decided to break out from Antioch a few weeks later, his forces fell apart. According to Muslim sources, the Crusader army owed its victory to treachery caused by a power struggle within Kerbogha's own ranks.

Kerbogha's emirs were nervous that the governor – if he were to successfully defeat

the Crusaders – would be so powerful that they would never be able to further their own ambitions.

When the city gates opened and the Crusaders came forward to fight the Muslim army, which was more than twice their size, some of the emirs discreetly withdrew their own forces and let the Christians march forward.

EDESSA'S FALL WAS A MAJOR LOSS

Muslim divisions would ensure relative peace for the Crusader States over the next 50 years – a period when Jerusalem and the other Crusader cities flourished. But by 1144, the peace was over. A Muslim force under Imad al-Din Zengi, atabeg of Mosul and Aleppo, lay siege to the Crusader city of Edessa. The city fell using traditional siege techniques

of the kind mastered by the knights.

"They saw the wall broken

on all sides by the engines; in the mine on the north the foundation of the wall was destroyed...

and the gaps between them were filled with naphtha, oil and sulphur, that they might burn like a torch and the wall fall," recounted a Syriac chronicle. "Zengi gave orders to start the fire beneath the wall... The Turks forced their way

in and slew with the sword, sparing none. That day about six thousand were killed."

Edessa was a huge loss to the Crusaders – not only in human terms, but also militarily. It had been known for its skilled warriors, including a conscripted force of Armenians who'd proved themselves both on horseback and as foot soldiers.

The four Crusader States – collectively known as *Outremer* (Overseas in French) – >>>>>

"When the Crusaders came forward to fight... some of the emirs discreetly withdrew their own forces"

The headgear was a pointed iron helmet with a nose guard.

The cut and colours of the robe worn over the chain mail were often inspired by civilian fashion.

The bow gave the Muslims a long range.

The chain mail went to his knees. It had long sleeves but did not protect the rider's hands, legs or feet.

Helmet with iron rings to protect the neck. For extra defence, the emir wore a small hat under the helmet, lined with feathers.

The shield was small and round or oval-shaped.

The emirs often carried multiple blades, a curved scimitar and a short sword.

The legs were protected by a thick layer of fabric wrapped with leather straps.

The lightweight armour meant that the emirs were also able to fight on foot.

SYRIAN EMIR, 1200

LIGHTWEIGHT: Muslim nobles were far more style-conscious than their Christian counterparts. Emirs often wore silk cardigans over their chain mail according to the latest fashion. The cowed hauberk was the same material as the knight's, but shorter and lighter. Their pointed helmets sported a nose guard, but no visor. The bow and arrow gave the Muslim horsemen a long-range weapon – for close combat they had the lance, scimitar, short swords and knives. Their shields were round and small.

Scimitar: could be wielded with one hand and was easy to use on horseback. Inflicted deep wounds.

Bow: the enemy could be fired on from a distance and its advance halted by a hail of arrows.

Horses: long-legged thoroughbred Arabians that were fast and easy to manoeuvre.

“These Turks began,
all at once, to howl and
gabble and shout”



The Arab riders' web grew increasingly tight around the few knights remaining to defend King Guy at the Battle of the Horns of Hattin.

>>> had already struggled to scrape together enough warriors to defend their small strip of Christian cities and states. When the Crusaders arrived in the Holy Land, they'd established their society as it was back in Europe, with land belonging to a number of large landowners, allowing the Crusaders to divide the existing properties among their number. The knights – as in Europe – had to be available for military service. Unlike in Europe, however, they lacked both cities and manpower.

The narrow strip of land conquered by the Crusaders was nothing in comparison to the vast expanse of France and Germany, and many of the thousands of Crusaders who'd enthusiastically poured into Jerusalem in 1099 soon returned home.

Good warriors were in short supply, and with the loss of Edessa, the Crusaders were ill-equipped to fight among increasingly hostile neighbours. The problem was compounded by the fact that the Outremer was only a loose political organisation. While European kings were powerful monarchs, the kings of Outremer were "first among equals", and although individual cities and states were obliged to provide soldiers for the defence of the realm, they could easily evade their responsibilities.

In fact, the local Christian rulers proved as enthusiastic as the emirs when it came to having their cake and wanting to eat it, even when doing so directly compromised the security of the kingdom. This policy became increasingly dangerous, for as the Crusaders faced repeated setbacks, fortunes were turning in favour of the Muslims.

YOUNG COMMANDER UNITED MUSLIMS

In Shia Egypt, Crusaders and Sunnis had vied to exploit the regime's weakness. Victory went to the Sunnis, and it was skilfully exploited by a young commander named Saladin. He had served his uncle, the commander Shirkuh. On Shirkuh's death, Saladin took over his position, murdered his closest rival and, at the age of 31, declared himself Sultan of Egypt.

Technically – like his uncle – Saladin was in the service of the Syrian ruler Nur ad-Din, but when Nur ad-Din also died, Saladin rode into Syria with a small but well-disciplined force and took Nur ad-Din's place. He then declared to the Egyptians that they were now to be considered Shiites, which he enforced by cracking down on any lapses back to the old religion. Unification was helped by the fact that Saladin called for holy war at every opportunity against the Christians, whom he referred to as Satan himself.

There is nothing to suggest that Saladin personally had such a narrow view of the

Arabian horses were tamed by humans around 4,500 years ago and can survive for up to 72 hours without water.

Christians, but politically he was willing to use any means to crush his enemies and retake Jerusalem.

Saladin therefore immediately set about streamlining the army and preparing it for a major war. First, he assembled an elite force of around eight thousand men, including mounted archers.

With this small but effective force, he defeated the overly ambitious emirs and other insubordinates. The army was then supplemented by mamluks – Turkish soldier-slaves – and large numbers of mercenaries from near and far.

Saladin, aware that he needed time to unite the Arabs, made no hasty moves, while the Crusaders found themselves increasingly riven by internal strife. Even when Raynald de Châtillon – one of the Christian rulers of Oultrejordan, now the Kingdom of Jordan – began attacking Arab trade and pilgrim caravans, he refused to be provoked.

But in 1186, Raynald again attacked a caravan. When one of them had reminded him of the truce, he had mockingly replied, "Let your Muhammad come and save you!"

When the news reached Saladin several

MEANWHILE IN MONGOLIA

GENGHIS KHAN AND HIS HORSEMEN SWEEP ACROSS CHINA

The Arabs weren't the only ones born to fight on horseback. To the east, in 1206, Genghis Khan gathered the Mongol tribes of present-day Mongolia and marched on China. On the open plains, the Mongol army of swift mounted archers was almost invincible, and when it came to walled cities, Genghis Khan also learned the art of siege warfare. In 1219, he captured Beijing and was soon ruler of northern China. His goals were reportedly simple: defeat his enemies, take all they possessed, ride their horses, and hold their wives and daughters in his arms.



weeks later, he vowed to kill Raynald, but for now didn't act. Instead, Saladin went first to Jerusalem and brought the matter before King Guy, who declared that it was out of his hands – he could do nothing.

SALADIN CALLED FOR HOLY WAR

For Saladin, the snub was the starting shot for his final battle with the Christians. In April 1187, as the hills and fields around Damascus filled with fanatical warriors, banners flying and camel-skin tents, Saladin spoke to his trusted men: "The >>>>>

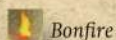
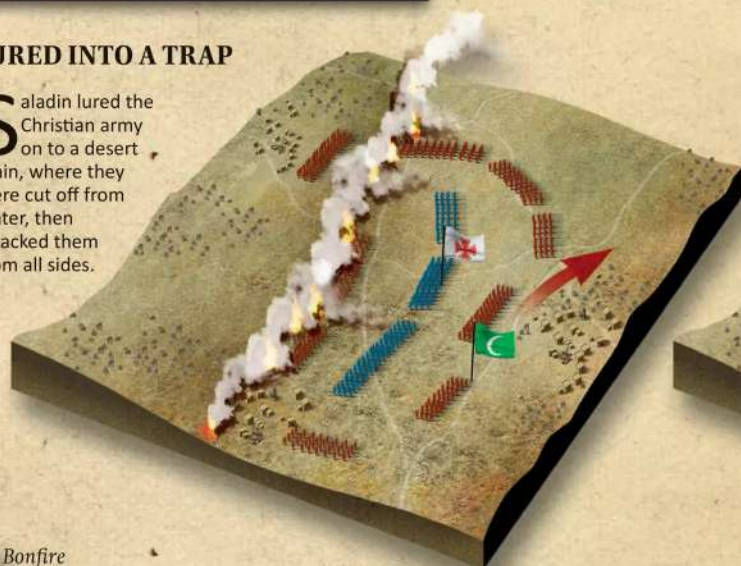


Arabic inscription mentions Sultan Saladin on this stone from Alexandria's city walls.

BATTLE OF THE HORNS OF HATTIN

LURED INTO A TRAP

Saladin lured the Christian army on to a desert plain, where they were cut off from water, then attacked them from all sides.



Bonfire



Saladin's army



Christian forces

BONFIRE FORCED THE CRUSADER ARMY BACK

The inhabitants of the village of Hattin built bonfires overnight, then lit them at dawn. When the thirsty and exhausted crusaders saw that they were surrounded, they tried to flee, but were driven back by the smoke. Meanwhile, Saladin and his commanders rode south around the battle.

CRUSADER VANGUARD FLED

The Christian army was divided into three groups. The vanguard was led by Raymond III of Tripoli, the main force by King Guy, and the rearguard by Balian d'Ibelin. Raymond managed to escape by breaking through the Muslim forces, tipping the balance of power firmly in Saladin's favour.

>>> opportunity now before us may never arise again. In my view, the Muslim army must confront all the infidels in an organised battle. We must throw ourselves resolutely into the Jihad before our troops disperse."

In June, Saladin gathered all his troops midway between Tiberias and Damascus. Twelve thousand cavalymen, plus foot soldiers and auxiliaries, set off shouting, "Victory over God's enemy!"

The plan was to lay a trap for the Christian army. By besieging the Kingdom of Jerusalem's city of Tiberias, the Crusaders would be lured into attacking in difficult terrain.

CAMELS PROVIDED KEY ADVANTAGE

Saladin and his army had camped on a lush plain packed with fruit trees and close to the fresh flow of the River Jordan. Near the

camp was an extinct volcano with two rocky peaks called the Horns of Hattin after the village on its slopes. Here Saladin waited for the Christian army, whose road he knew would be long and difficult.

Although the Christian forces had adapted to some extent to local conditions in the Crusader States – for example, by providing themselves with bowmen to defend against the mounted Arab archers, they still organised their army largely according to European tradition.

This also applied to the planning of supply lines – which were virtually non-existent for the Crusaders in 1187. In Europe, forces usually foraged for supplies en route. The Arabs, on the other hand, were far better prepared for this part of the war, meticulously planning their supply lines before dispatching their armies.

They carried large quantities of food and water, brought by camels, which, unlike horses, could go without water for days and move quickly and smoothly through desert and other rough terrain.

On 3rd July, the 12,000-strong Christian force under



The Horns of Hattin rise in the barren desert where Saladin defeated the Crusader army.

King Guy set out to stop Saladin, whom they now suspected – correctly – to be heading for Jerusalem. Food and water were in short supply, for they anticipated the march to Lake Tiberias and Saladin's camp would take only a few hours.

They were badly mistaken, for after a short march they were met by a team of archers on horseback, who fired at them from all sides. Only a few of those hit were either killed or badly wounded, but the attack slowed the march, which was exactly what Saladin had planned. The landscape was barren and exposed. There were no springs and the river beds were dry. In the evening, the Crusaders, struggling with thirst from the heat, had to camp on the hilltop above the Horns of Hattin. Between them and the tempting waters of Lake Tiberias lay Saladin's camp.

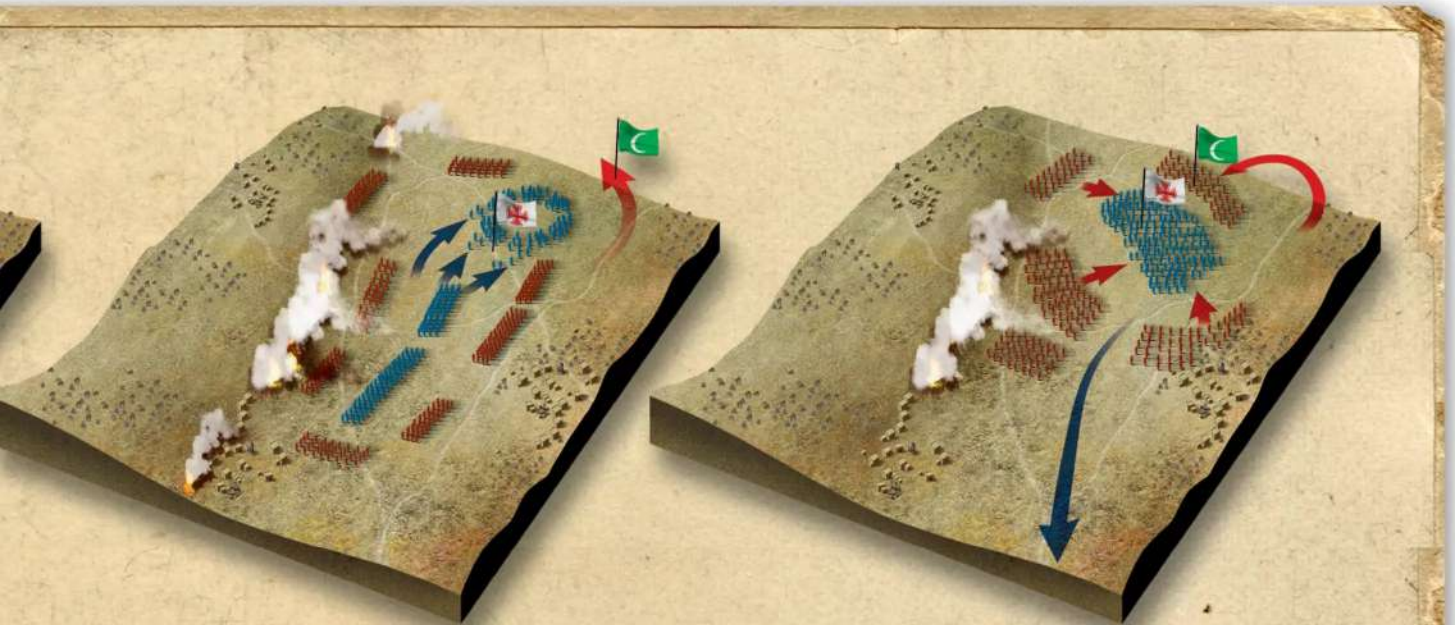
FALLEN TENT SIGNIFIED VICTORY

While the Christians tossed and turned in their tents, trying to ignore their burning thirst, Saladin instructed his emirs to surround the Crusaders and prepare for the following day's battle.

At dawn, King Guy's soldiers tumbled out of the tents, driven by a single, desperate urge to find something to drink.

They did not get far, for Saladin's men were waiting for them, ready to cut them down one by one. Those who survived tried to escape by fleeing up the mountain, but Saladin's men set fire to the dry grass and the smoke forced them to turn back.

In the midst of it all, the Christians lost one of their most important relics – a splinter of the Holy Cross. "The Muslims



GUY FORAYED WITH HIS KNIGHTS

■ The Christian army was herded in a group that gathered around King Guy. The king tried to set up an entrenched camp in the middle of it all, defended by the 150-odd knights he had left. Meanwhile, the Crusaders were completely surrounded by the Muslims, who tightened the net around them, as Saladin rode in from the east.

SALADIN DELIVERED THE DECISIVE BLOW

■ The remnants of Guy's army were annihilated between a Muslim main force from the south-west and Saladin's knights charging in from the east. After the defeat, Guy surrendered. During the final part of the battle, Balian d'Ibelin managed to escape the battlefield together with some of the knights in the rearguard.

gained possession of the True Cross. For the *Franj* (Franks), this was the heaviest of losses," recounted Saladin's adviser Baha ad-din Ibn Shaddad.

Despite this, the surviving Christians – around 150 knights – continued to fight. They entrenched themselves above the village of Hattin and pitched their tents. Although the Muslims pressed them from all sides, the knights protected their king's tent. Saladin watched from his horse with his 17-year-old son, Al-Malik al-Afdal, at his side. "We have beaten them!" his son exulted. "Silence! We have crushed them only when that tent on the hill has fallen," Saladin snapped back.

At once the tent crumpled, and Saladin dismounted and prostrated himself on the ground in prayer. The sultan then led King Guy to his tent, where he was given water

to drink. According to Muslim custom, the prisoner who is offered water must be spared, so Guy was allowed to live. His kingdom, however, was doomed. Saladin captured Jerusalem in October 1187, and over the next century he and his successors slowly but surely ate away at the Crusader

States, which eventually consisted of little more than a narrow strip along the Mediterranean coast.

The Crusader army had begun to learn its lesson, however. In later battles, archers played a major role, and the Christians made sure to set up supply lines for the Third

Crusade (1189-1192), when Richard the Lionheart diligently exploited Cyprus as a base for shipping food and other supplies.

All was in vain, however, and the progressively weak Crusader States increasingly resorted to defensive strategies

rather than outright combat. One solid fortress after another sprang up to protect the fragile Crusader enclaves. The castles, a phenomenon the knights would bring back to Europe, were effective, though. Their thick walls held off the Muslims for another hundred years. ■

30,000
men were in
Saladin's army;
Guy had 20,000
– including
1,200 knights.

SALAH AD-DIN YUSUF IBN AYYUB, 1137-1193

MUSLIM RALLYING POINT

■ Part of Saladin's name meant "Righteousness of the Faith", and while he could be cruel, he didn't harbour a blind hatred of all Christians. After his victory over Richard I, he invited the king's envoy to talks, where he displayed the relic 'The Holy Cross'. Saladin was a highly gifted soldier and commander, but his greatest achievement was political. By calling for holy war, he united a Muslim world that had been divided by

religious and political strife. To his friends, Saladin was generous. A little too generous, according to his advisers, who kept part of his fortune in reserve so that the commander would preserve some for a rainy day.

United the Arab world – Won the Battle of the Horns of Hattin – Took Jerusalem







A SLEW OF CASTLES SPRANG UP

1102-1303

As soon as the Crusaders arrived in the Holy Land, they began to build castles. Mighty defences sprang up across the arid plains of the Middle East and were used to extend the power and influence of the Christian states. These sturdy fortresses became an integral part of life in the Crusader-held regions, ensuring their survival for centuries to come.

1102-1303



1102 The Tower of Ramla saves King Baldwin I and secures Jerusalem.

1115 Baldwin conquers Oultrejordain.

1140s The Crusader castle of Kerak is built.

1142 The Order of St John takes over and enlarges Krak des Chevaliers.

1186 Saladin is victorious at the Horns of Hattin and conquers Jerusalem.

1303 The Mamluks capture the last Crusader fortress.

1102 >>> 1115 >>> 1142 >>> 1186 >>> 1303 >>>

On 17th May 1102, the king of Jerusalem, Baldwin I, got a nasty surprise. With 500 warriors, he had set out to meet a Muslim army that threatened his newly formed Crusader state. According to intelligence, his 500 knights and foot soldiers would be enough to defeat the Muslims, but Baldwin soon found out that his spies had been sorely mistaken. Near the town of Ramla, 45 kilometres from Jerusalem, he was attacked by a thousand-strong force of Sudanese archers, and Arabs and Berbers on horseback.

The king was surrounded, and one by one his men were cut down. Desperate, Baldwin sought safety in the massive, fortified tower he had built on the site two years earlier. Here he hid until he could ride out under cover of night for reinforcements. Several of the king's best men fell in the ensuing clash. Still, he had reason to be

pleased. Thanks to the tower, the kingdom, the army and the fledgling Crusader state were all saved.

CASTLES WERE PART OF DAILY LIFE

The tower at Ramla joined a proud line of fortified structures built by the Crusaders in the Holy Land. As well as shielding them from attacking Muslim neighbours, the fortresses became focal points for activities such as tax collection, the reception of foreign visitors and other forms of social events for royalty and higher nobility. The massive walls and high towers also became a way for the Crusaders to demonstrate Christianity's new power in foreign lands, as the appearance of the castles instilled fear and respect among Muslims.

The purpose and role of the castles changed with time and circumstance, but the mighty structures, many of which can still be seen today, remained an important part of everyday life in the Crusader states – and were a major reason why they survived as long as they did.

The Crusaders were familiar with castles and fortifications. Those who took part in the First Crusade from 1096 to 1099,

Krak des Chevaliers' inner wall is about 31 metres thick and the fortress had enough supplies to withstand a five-year siege.

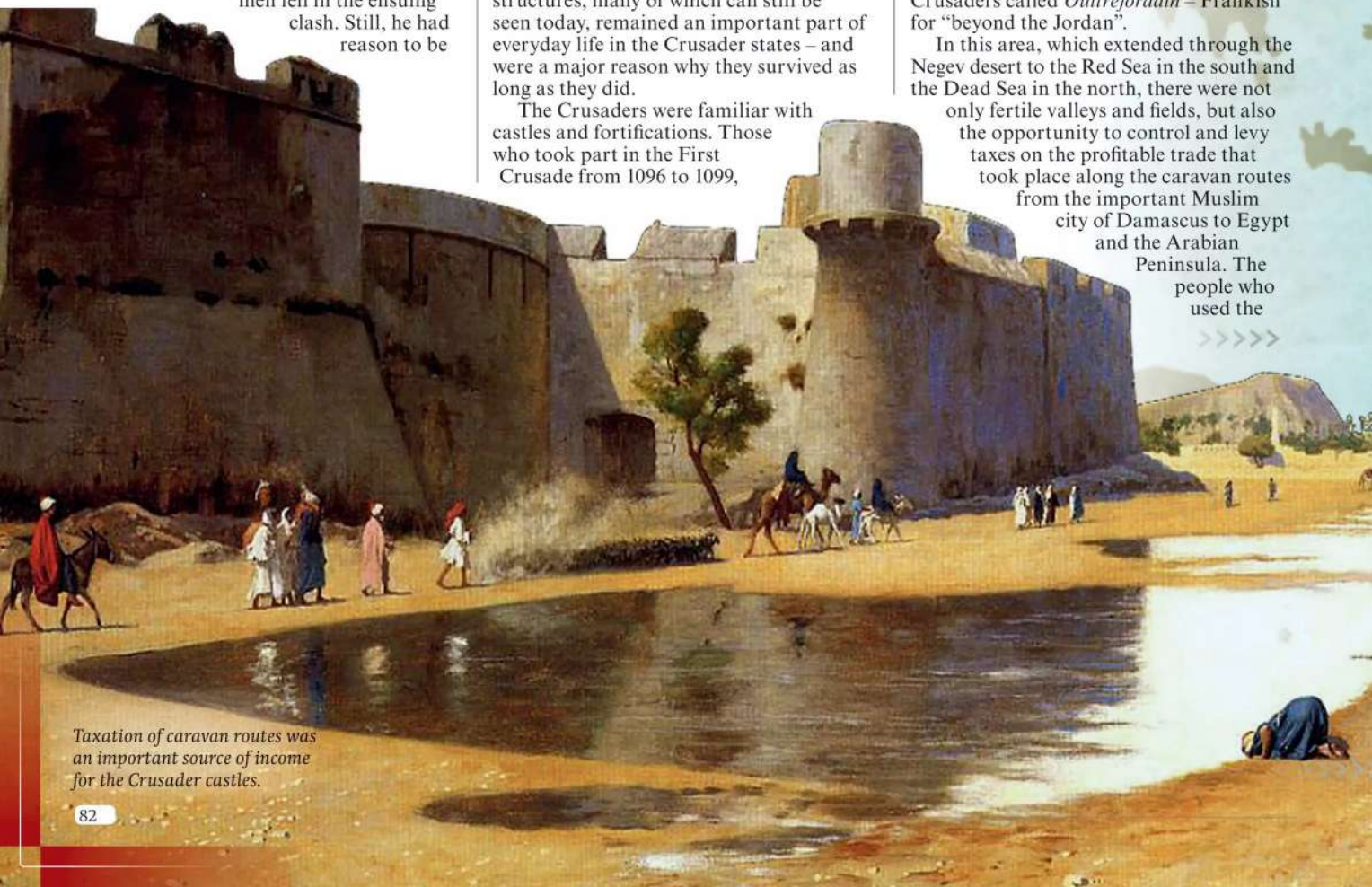
whether noble, clergy or commoners, had grown up either in or near a castle. The castles of Europe were at once fortresses, centres of political power and meeting places. From there, taxes were collected, and supplies stored and distributed to the population.

For the Crusaders, however, the building of fortresses, which began as soon as they had taken Jerusalem, was also an urgent necessity. Once the city was conquered, most of the Crusaders returned to Europe. The foot soldiers were mainly farmers and householders, and now that their goal had been achieved and Jerusalem conquered, they returned home to tend the land and support their families. The first ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Crusader Godfrey of Bouillon, was left with around 300 knights – a worryingly small number, given that they were surrounded by hostile Arab states and had long and vulnerable supply lines back to Europe. To ensure the Crusaders could defend themselves and keep the flow of supplies intact, Godfrey built a series of fortresses – including one at Jaffa, the only Christian port city close to Jerusalem.

Baldwin I picked up where Godfrey left off and expanded the building programme. The king had grand ambitions for Christianity and envisaged a state stretching further east into the area the Crusaders called *Oultrejordain* – Frankish for “beyond the Jordan”.

In this area, which extended through the Negev desert to the Red Sea in the south and the Dead Sea in the north, there were not only fertile valleys and fields, but also the opportunity to control and levy taxes on the profitable trade that took place along the caravan routes from the important Muslim city of Damascus to Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula. The people who used the

>>>>



Taxation of caravan routes was an important source of income for the Crusader castles.

HOLY LAND WAS HEAVILY FORTIFIED



All along the Mediterranean coast of the Holy Land, the Crusaders built or captured about 50 castles and fortresses. Their main purpose was to ensure the survival of the fragile Christian states by resisting Muslim attacks, securing supplies from Europe and collecting taxes.

0 5 km

Important Crusader fortresses

Crusader states

Battle of the Horns of Hattin

King Baldwin IV won a surprising victory over Saladin at the Battle of Montgisard near the Crusader fortress of Ramla in 1177.

KRAK DES CHEVALIERS

■ The main Crusader castle of Tripoli was given to the Christian warrior monks of the Order of St John in 1142. Krak des Chevaliers was originally a Kurdish castle called Hisn al-Akrad, which the monks extended and improved.



KERAK

■ The location of Kerak was decided during King Baldwin I's conquest in 1115. Built in the 1140s, it eventually became the area's most important castle, as its position on the Dead Sea allowed the ruler to control the caravan routes.



MONTREAL

■ On the Edom plain, Jerusalem's King Baldwin I built a fortress, like Kerak, completely from scratch to control caravans to and from the Arabian Peninsula. The name Montreal means "Royal Mountain".



RED SEA

“Sand provided flexibility in the event of quakes”

>>>> routes – Arabs – would also have to stay on friendly terms with the Christian states, otherwise they risked being attacked and having their goods plundered.

BUILDERS IN THEIR THOUSANDS

The Crusaders often captured existing settlements from the Arabs, but Oultrejordain's largest fortresses, Kerak and Montreal, were built from scratch – Montreal on the plain of Edom, where the land was very fertile, and Kerak on the Dead Sea.

Castles were always built as high up as possible and, preferably, on a mountain spur, surrounded by steep slopes. Of course, this made construction very challenging for builders and craftsmen, but it was worth the effort when the castle came under attack. If the huge structures were on the edge of a precipice, with steep slopes on three of the four sides, the enemy could really only approach from one direction – over the mountain spur. The soldiers in the castle could therefore concentrate on defending that side and more easily repel the attack. To make sure the castle was as unapproachable as possible, the cliff sides were cut smooth in places.

Archaeologists do not know how the construction was completed, but castle building was a manpower-intensive affair. The *engigneurs* (engineers) in charge of the construction had a wide range of skills and were usually local second- and third-generation Crusaders, or Greeks, Jews or Armenians. Good builders enjoyed a high status in society, even if they were not members of the nobility.

In addition to the master builders, skilled stonemasons, carpenters and bricklayers also helped with the construction. To keep the workforce supplied, there was even a group of men whose only job was to cook and clothe the

builders. Because of the military importance of the castles, the construction site was guarded by soldiers, and the total number of people involved in the work could easily run into the tens of thousands.

The stones used were rarely new, as the Crusaders preferred to take materials from existing ancient or medieval buildings. In particular, embossed masonry, which had been used in the Middle East for thousands of years, was a hit. The method was unknown in Europe, but the uneven surface of the carved stones ensured that projectiles and other firearms bounced off.

In general, the Crusaders' construction techniques have surprised archaeologists. For example, sand was used for the foundations of Ascalon, the theory being that it was intended to provide flexibility in the event of earthquakes, which are common in the region. When the foundations are on sand, they follow the movements of the quake instead of cracking.

WATER SUPPLY WAS CRUCIAL

From the beginning, the Crusaders' castles resembled those of Byzantium: rectangular in shape, with double walls and a host of flanking towers. Historians don't know whether the design was due to the Crusaders deliberately copying the Byzantines or simply finding that the shape

was the most practical, but the layouts were strikingly similar. As enemies approached the high castles, they were greeted by a rain of arrows and stones fired from the towers. When they came closer, boiling water and hot oil or sand were poured down upon the attackers from large metal vessels on the wall. The monk Thietmar of Merseburg, who visited Montreal in 1217, praised the castle as “a most excellent fortress, surrounded by triple walls and as strong as any I have ever seen”.

None of this mattered, however, if the castle did not have access to clean drinking water. Many well-fortified castles had succumbed over time because the water ran out or became contaminated during a prolonged siege. Below Montreal, there was a ready supply of fresh water, but if soldiers ventured down to fetch it,

they risked being killed or taken hostage. The builders solved the problem simply and effectively – they cut a shaft through the mountain and fitted it with 365 steps. Via the shaft, the garrison could draw fresh water from the source of the springs underground without fear of attack.

Other castles had different solutions to the problem of securing drinking water. At the fortress of Acre, the garrison collected rainwater, while Krak des Chevaliers in present-day Syria brought water in from the mountains through an aqueduct.

Inside the castle walls, the water was stored in a large open cistern. The system was more vulnerable than the Montreal facility, because the aqueduct could be sabotaged by the enemy in the event of a siege. On the other hand, the cistern acted as an additional defence, because it prevented enemies from undermining the outer ring wall.

Undermining was a widespread technique for making castle walls collapse and was usually detected by soldiers inside the castle placing barrels of water along the wall. Ripples on the water indicated that the besieging forces were digging through. The soldiers inside the castle then rushed to beat back the enemy.

WEDDING UNDER ATTACK

In many places, the castles reflected the local Byzantine or Islamic influence, and the Crusaders spared no expense in their decoration. In Atlit, in present-day Israel, archaeologists have found the remains of a Turkish bath, and Montreal probably had a park within its walls. According to the German bishop Willbrand of Oldenburg (1180–1233), who took part in the Fifth



The importance of castles to Europeans was reflected in coats of arms.

TECHNOLOGY.....

CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

DAILY LIFE.....

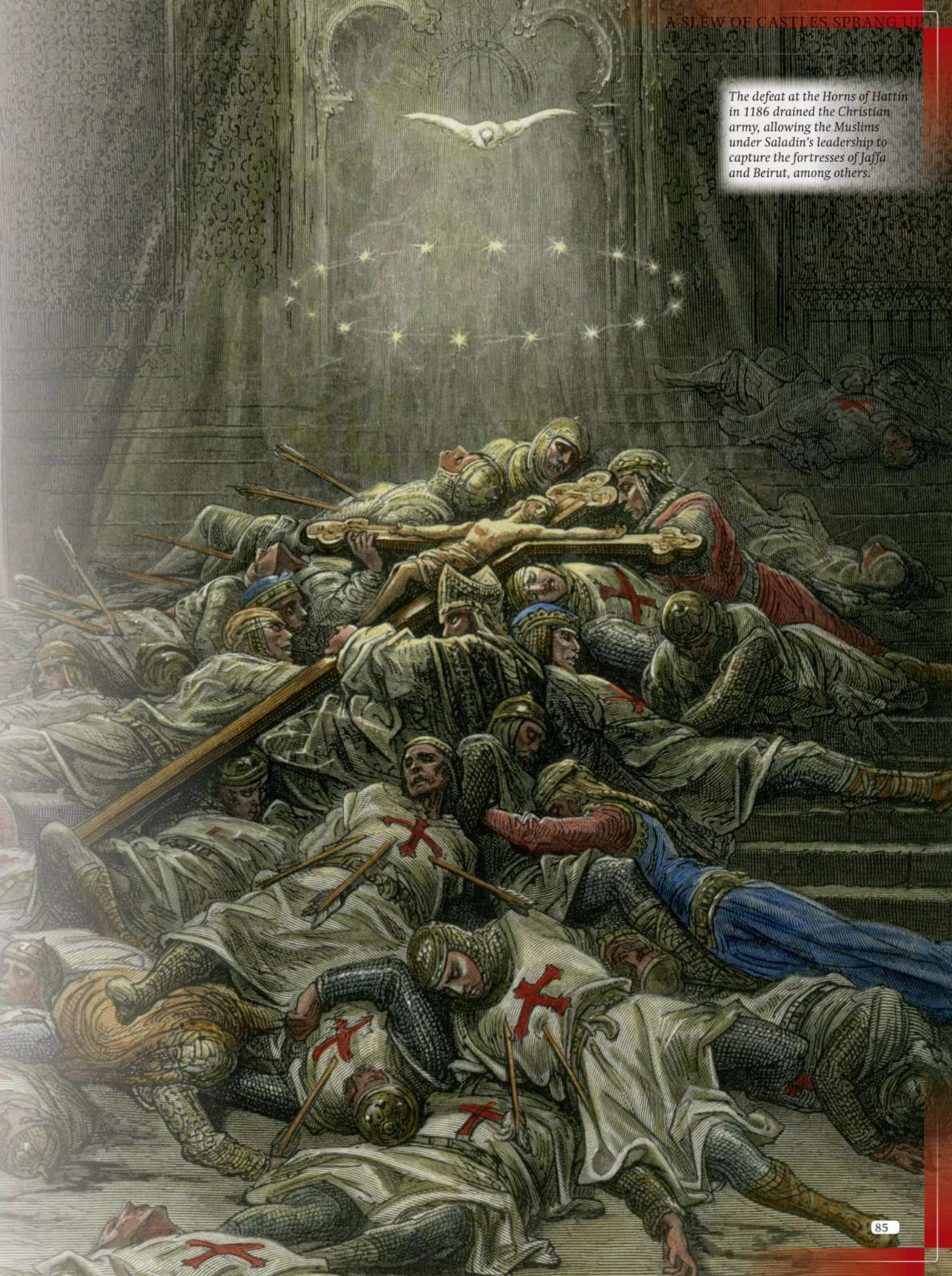


Castle tech transferred to Europe

The Crusader castles were inspired by Muslim, Byzantine and Armenian fortifications. They proved so solid that builders from France and England took elements of them home. What is now understood as the classic medieval castle

was inspired by Crusader fortresses. This is seen, for example, in the fact that European castles began to be fitted with the double curtain walls of Crusader castles, the Tower of London being the most famous example.

The defeat at the Horns of Hattin in 1186 drained the Christian army, allowing the Muslims under Saladin's leadership to capture the fortresses of Jaffa and Beirut, among others.





KRAK DES CHEVALIERS

Krak des Chevaliers is located on a 650-metre-high mountain about 40 kilometres from the Syrian city of Homs. The fortress is possibly the best-preserved fortification of the Middle Ages.

■ Krak des Chevaliers was conquered in 1099 by Crusaders on their way to Jerusalem. At the time, there was only a small fortification on the hilltop, but in 1142 the site was taken over by the Order of St John, who built the present fortress and gave it the name Crac de l'Ospital. The name Krak des Chevaliers was only given to the fortress in more recent times, during

archaeological excavations in the nineteenth century. In the Crusader era, Krak des Chevaliers was primarily a military base, housing around 2,000 men. The impressive fortress was also an administrative centre from which the surrounding area was governed and taxes collected. The illustration shows what the castle looked like in the mid-thirteenth century.



- 1 The outer wall was nine metres high and surrounded the castle.
- 2 An aqueduct brought water from a tunnel in the hillside to an internal cistern, so the castle always had fresh water. The cistern also served as a moat in case the castle was attacked via the mountain spur.
- 3 A 20-metre-high sloping wall built outside the castle wall prevented siege towers from getting too close to the wall itself. The surface of the wall was carved and very hard. Knights inside the castle could attack besieging forces by throwing stones at the wall. When they hit its hard surface, they broke into many small pieces and acted like shrapnel.
- 4 The rounded shape of the towers allowed archers to fire their weapons along the castle walls, while keeping themselves safe from attack.
- 5 The south wall's towers served as quarters for the 60 or so knights who made up the castle's aristocracy. A round chamber with arched ceilings may have served as the lord's private room.
- 6 The east gate was the only entrance to the castle. If an enemy managed to breach the gate, he was led through a long, winding passage that the defenders could fire at from the slits in the walls and roof.
- 7 The lower chambers were used as living quarters and for storing food, horses and ammunition.
- 8 The inner bailey with its finely carved Gothic arches served as a cloister for the Knights of the Order of St John.
- 9 Krak des Chevaliers had its own mill so the castle could grind flour. The storehouse was 120 metres long and located under the courtyard.



Krak des Chevaliers guarded the only road through Syria's mountains that was snow-free all year round.

Hot oil forced enemies back

Hot water, sand and oil were used to force an attacking enemy back down its siege ladders. The latter was the worst to have thrown at your head, because it clung to your skin and burned relentlessly. The oil was pressed from nuts, flax or the like, and poured into a large iron pot. The oil was then heated until it began to smoke. When it reached this point, it was so hot

that it could be ignited merely by contact with the air. Therefore, the oil could not be heated any further nor boiled. The defenders of the castle poured the smoking hot oil into small pots and vats and could then throw it at attackers. On contact with the skin, the viscous oil burned and caused the enemy to tumble back down the siege ladder.



If enemies tried to climb the wall, Krak des Chevaliers' defenders could force them back by pouring smoking hot oil over them.

TECHNOLOGY.....

CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

DAILY LIFE.....



The medieval castle's worst enemy

Large throwing machines called trebuchets were indispensable in medieval castle raids. Stones, beehives or dead animals were placed in a sling at the end of an arm and then whirled towards or over the enemy's walls. They

used a counterweight that accelerated the sling arm. When the sling reached a certain angle, it released the projectile. The trebuchet was both more accurate and faster to load than its predecessor, the catapult.

>>>> Crusade (1213–1221), the castle in Beirut was fitted with mosaic floors representing rolling waves. A room in the castle also had a fountain shaped like a dragon.

The most beautiful decorations, however, belonged to the castle chapels, which were decorated with murals, floor mosaics and beautifully carved stone panels. The chapel was usually next to the lord's private chambers, so he could pray when it suited him, and it was also used for political and military meetings.

The composition of the staff varied greatly, but craftsmen and servants usually made up a significant proportion of the castle's inhabitants. At Safed in northern Israel, 1,200 of the castle's total staff of 1,700 were employed in workshops and the kitchen, while only 430 were knights, archers or similar full-time warriors.

Some of the noble families in the Crusader states were so poor that they could barely afford to pay and feed their servants. This was especially true of the burghers of Antioch and Tripoli, who rarely received money from the collections set up by the Pope. They were therefore forced to

cultivate the surrounding land. For example, the Johannites at Margat Castle in Tripoli harvested more than 500 cartloads of crops a year. Surplus produce was sold in the markets, providing the castle with a welcome extra income. Salt extraction also often took place near the castles. Much of Syria's subsoil contains salt, and the mines were watched over from the castle towers to protect the production process.

The castles were also used for trials and to house important prisoners. Some lived in squalor until they died, while others were treated with dignity. A few almost became part of the lord's family. This was the case with the great Muslim commander Saladin, who was imprisoned at Kerak as a young man and whose good relations later benefitted the castle community.

It was common for important weddings to be held in the castles, and in October 1183, Humphrey of Toron was to marry Isabel, sister of the king of Jerusalem, in a grand wedding at Kerak. Unfortunately, Saladin attacked just as the wedding was about to begin. The musicians cowered in fright as stones hurled by the Muslims

thundered against the castle walls. In the midst of the attack, the mother of the groom, Etienne, sent word to Saladin, reminding him that once, when she was a child, he had been a prisoner at Kerak, and that he had held her in his arms. She gently asked him to leave the family to celebrate their wedding in peace. The commander then asked in which part of the castle the feast was being held, and forbade his soldiers to aim at that part of Kerak.

PRINCE PUT KINGDOM AT RISK

The area of Oultrejordain served as an outpost for the Crusader states – a role that successive rulers took seriously. This was particularly true of Renaud de Châtillon (1125–1187), a French knight who gained power over the region through marriage.

During his time in Antioch, Renaud had made a name for himself with his merciless and almost sadistic treatment of enemies. Among other things, he had punished an insubordinate patriarch by placing him naked and smeared with honey in the burning sun on the roof of the citadel. In Oultrejordain, he continued his brutal ways by throwing prisoners of war and other miscreants over the cliffs of Kerak.

Trade caravans passed through the castle territory with their precious cargo. They soon proved too great a temptation for Renaud, and in 1181 he had his soldiers raid the Arab merchants.

The situation was critical, because the Arabs under Saladin's leadership were a threat to the Crusader states. Four years earlier, Saladin and the Christians – including Renaud – had clashed at the Battle of Montgisard. The Crusaders had defeated Saladin, and peace had hitherto been held together only by a fragile truce, which Renaud's crimes against the Arab merchants now broke. Saladin complained to the king of Jerusalem, Baldwin IV, who shrugged his shoulders in resignation. Oultrejordain and the towns were his, but he could not control the region's wayward leader.

In 1186, Renaud again attacked an Arab caravan. This time he didn't just loot – he also took the merchants and their wives and children hostage. When Saladin approached him to negotiate, he was turned away. The Arab leader was provoked to such an extent that there was no turning back. On 4th July, Saladin defeated the Crusaders at the Horns of Hattin, north of Jerusalem, and beheaded Renaud; soon Muslim forces were marching through the Holy Land. The Christian army had numbered some 20,000 soldiers, draining towns and castles of men.

Saladin knew how important the castles were to the existence of the Holy Land, as his secretary Imad al-Din noted, saying that to take its fortresses was to take its life.

After the victory at the Horns of Hattin, Saladin could easily capture important cities and fortresses, such as Acre, Jaffa, Beirut, Ashkelon and Jerusalem itself. In May 1189, Montreal was next, but the defences proved their worth. The cliffs and



Jerusalem's King Guy and the Crusaders surrendered to the Muslim commander Saladin after the crushing defeat at the Horns of Hattin in 1187. Soon after, Saladin conquered Jerusalem.

high walls made it impossible to use siege towers, and the castle's inhabitants had plenty of provisions and fresh drinking water from the springs below. However, the salt they used to get from the Dead Sea soon became scarce. As food also began to run out, some reportedly became so desperate that they sold their wives and children to provide food. Only in May 1189 – after a two-year siege – did Montreal surrender, and the mighty fortress fell into Saladin's hands.

It was clear to the Crusaders that they could rely on no one but themselves. Neither the Pope nor the Byzantine emperor could help. New fortresses were built around major cities, of which Antioch, with its population of around 100,000, was one of the largest.

Saladin died in 1193, and with his less belligerent successors, the Crusaders were given some respite. They used it to secure access to the sea by building a series of fortresses along the coast. Several existing castles were also improved and strengthened. The building sites grew and the Crusaders expanded their workforce by recruiting local people for the more routine tasks. Even prisoners of war

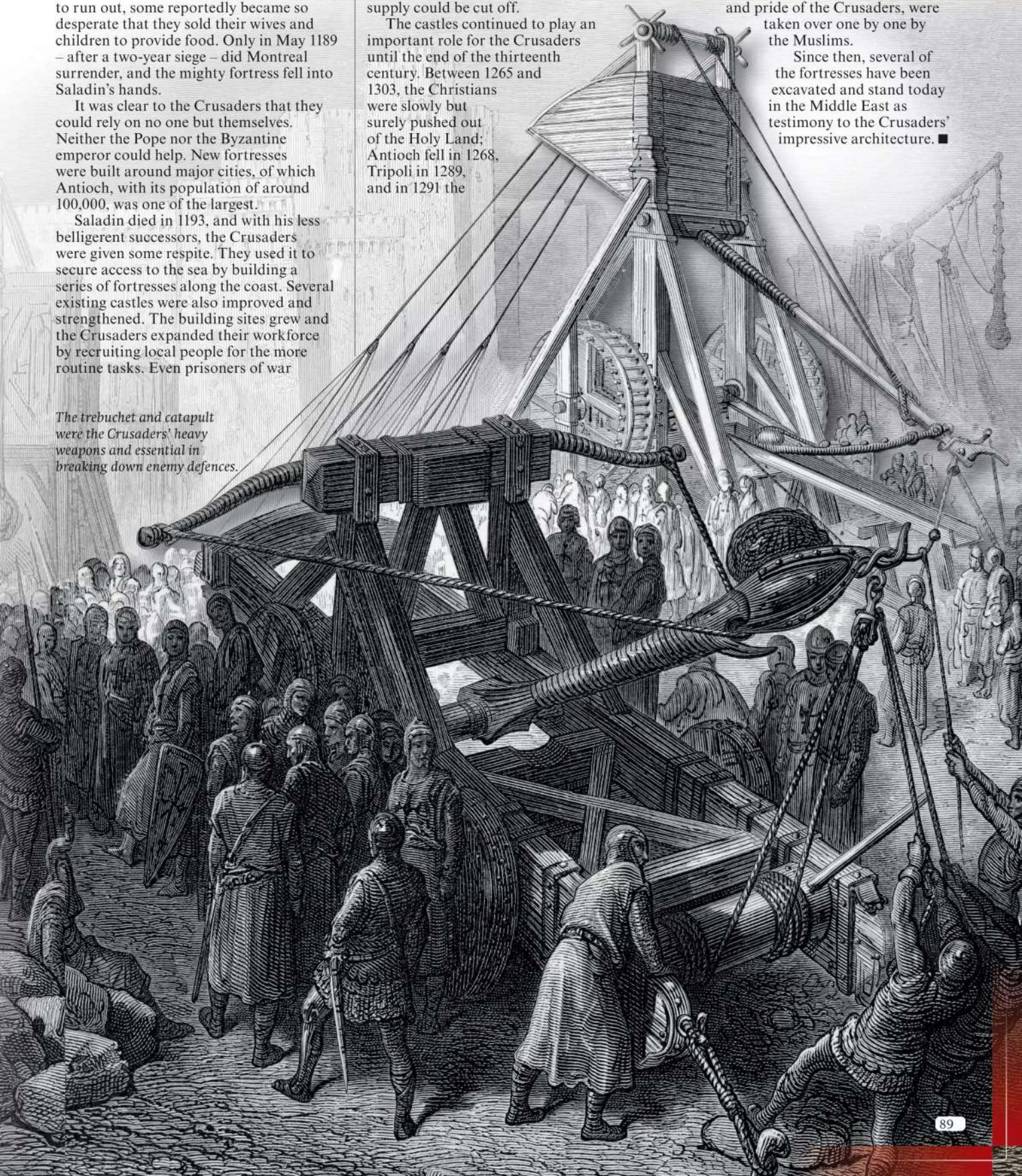
were put to work under close supervision. However, they were not allowed to build the strategically important parts of the castle, because if they escaped, they would be able to reveal where the walls were most vulnerable and how the water supply could be cut off.

The castles continued to play an important role for the Crusaders until the end of the thirteenth century. Between 1265 and 1303, the Christians were slowly but surely pushed out of the Holy Land; Antioch fell in 1268, Tripoli in 1289, and in 1291 the

fortresses of Acre, Tyre and Beirut were taken over by the new ruling power in the area, the Mamluks. In 1303, the last Crusader stronghold, Ruad, a small island off the coast of Syria, also fell. The castles, which had previously been the lifelines and pride of the Crusaders, were taken over one by one by the Muslims.

Since then, several of the fortresses have been excavated and stand today in the Middle East as testimony to the Crusaders' impressive architecture. ■

The trebuchet and catapult were the Crusaders' heavy weapons and essential in breaking down enemy defences.







MONEY FLOWED TO ITALY

700-1400



The Crusades were not just a battle for land and souls. The Holy Land also offered great opportunities for enterprising traders, which the northern Italian city states of Venice, Genoa and Pisa were quick to exploit. Merchants made so much money trading with the Crusaders that northern Italy became the richest region in Europe.



700-1400

700s Venice splits from the Byzantine Empire.

1000 Pirates are defeated; the Italians rule the Mediterranean.

1098 Genoa secures the first trade deal with the Crusaders.



1202-04 Crusaders sack Christian cities of Zadar and Constantinople to pay Venice.

1400s Genoese bankers finance the first great voyages of discovery.

700 >>> 1000 >>> 1098 >>> 1202 >>> 1400 >>>

The sailors could sense something was wrong when they sailed into the Crusader city of Acre in the summer of 1187. The Muslim commander Saladin had been attacking Christian possessions in the Holy Land for some time, and the crew of the northern Italian merchant ship feared that the Muslims had now conquered Acre. The men's suspicions were confirmed when a boat carrying armed Arabs slid alongside their vessel. Conrad, a nobleman aboard the merchant ship, asked everyone to keep quiet and let him do the talking.

Speaking in cool business-like terms, he told the Arab soldiers that the ship was a cargo vessel bringing goods from Genoa and that he wanted to broker a trade agreement with Saladin. Having set out his terms, Conrad asked the guards to fire a signal arrow when they returned to shore to confirm whether Saladin was willing to discuss a deal. The mighty general's approval came promptly, and the Christian ship was able to sail on.

The agreement between Saladin and Conrad shows just how important trade was for both sides in the Holy Land. Only a few weeks earlier, Saladin had wiped out the Christians at the Battle of the Horns of Hattin, captured the Crusader cities of Tiberias and Acre in what is now Israel, and begun the march that would take him to Jerusalem, the heart of the Holy Land. Both sides had declared a holy war against the other yet Saladin received a ship full of Christian traders.

Their Genoese nationality was not down to mere chance. Few made as much money

from the Crusader States and the trade between East and West as the Italian ports of Genoa, Pisa and Venice. They became so powerful through trade that they ruled kings and priests, and so rich that the north of Italy became Europe's leading region.

Their success was by no means certain when they first clashed with Muslims across the Mediterranean in the eighth and ninth centuries. Even then, the Italians had great ambitions, and their location could not have been better. In the north-east of Italy,

Sugar was reserved for the richest. In 1319, a pound of sugar cost two shillings – the equivalent of £75 per kilo in today's money.

Pisa and Genoa faced the Tyrrhenian Sea, while Venice was on the opposite side within the Adriatic's innermost bay. They were situated in prime positions for transporting goods to the many ports along the Mediterranean coast.

Everything looked positive for the region's merchants, but soon dark shadows appeared

over the azure waves. Barely 200 years after the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632, the Muslims had seized all of Arabia, much of North Africa and most of the Iberian Peninsula. Now, pirate ships plagued the Mediterranean, snapping up Italian merchants' ships and raiding coastal towns and ports. In the mid-ninth century, the Byzantine islands of Malta, Sicily and Crete fell into Muslim hands, and the fleets seized several cities in the south of mainland Italy. The unprepared Christian states looked on helplessly while the people along the coast fled in terror. Long stretches lay almost deserted.

The northern Italian cities, which had already gained a certain economic advantage from trade, fought hard. They built a powerful fleet that chased away the pirates.



Doge Enrico Dandolo's coin, called the grosso, consisted of 98.5 percent silver. It was suitable for international trade as it did not lose value.

By the eleventh century, the northern Italian cities ruled the Mediterranean.

POPE ASKED ITALIANS FOR HELP

The merchants had their eyes on the eastern Mediterranean from the start. From there, trade routes led to the Arabian Peninsula and the Far East, with its promised riches of silk, spice and other lucrative luxury goods. Until the end of the seventh century, Venice had belonged to the Byzantine Empire. Now an independent republic, Venice maintained close ties with the Byzantines and, in 1082, signed a trade treaty with Emperor Alexios I.

The agreement gave Venice several advantages, including tax exemptions in many Byzantine-controlled ports in the eastern Mediterranean. But the real boom came with the Crusades, and Italian cities played an important role from the outset. Pope Urban II immediately saw the cities' potential in the campaigns and enlisted their help with the First Crusade in 1096.

By 1098 Genoa had already proved its worth by contributing to Antioch's conquest. Its efforts won the Genoese the first trade deal with the Crusaders. As part of the agreement, Genoa was given a headquarters and housing that the city's merchants could use when trading in Antioch. This became the model for later agreements with the other Italian cities. Pisa, which joined the Crusade in 1099, and Venice, which joined in 1100, were also granted special rights in the towns and ports conquered by the Crusaders.

The cities contributed ships and supplies to the Christian army, and their help was richly rewarded. When Muslim forces captured King Baldwin II in 1123, the doge of Venice, Domenico Michiel, came to the royal's rescue. The doge sent 100 ships and 15,000 men that swept the Muslims away from the Crusader States' shores.

With the help of the Venetian navy, Acre was captured in 1124. In return, the doge

TECHNOLOGY.....

CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

DAILY LIFE.....



Crusade brought sugar to Europe

Before the Crusades, sugar was not known in Europe. Instead, honey was used to sweeten baked goods. In the Holy Land, the Crusaders quickly learned to grow sugar cane and produce large quantities of

the crop. Tyre, in present-day Lebanon, became a regional centre for sugar production and export. Almost all the sugar used in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries came from the Crusader States.

Venetian merchants sailed the Mediterranean trading textiles in the twelfth century.





Doge Domenico Michele besieged the port city of Tyre in 1123. In return, Venice received large tracts of land and payment in gold coins from the Crusaders.



In 1202, in a grand ceremony at St Mark's Church in Venice, Doge Enrico Dandolo encouraged thousands to join the Crusade.



The first stop on the Fourth Crusade's journey to the Holy Land was the port of Zadar, which the Crusaders captured for Venice in 1202.

>>>> and his merchants were granted privileges that superseded all previous contracts made between the Crusaders and the northern Italians. Venice was given trading rights and a church, a square, marketplaces, mills, and bathhouses. The arrangement applied to all cities within the Kingdom of Jerusalem save for the Holy City itself.

Venetian merchants were allowed to use their own scales when trading, although the king of Jerusalem reserved the right to supply the scales and determine prices in Jerusalem itself. In Acre, the Italians were promised a quarter of the city where every Venetian could feel "as free as in Venice itself", while in Tyre and Ashkelon, they were granted a third of the city and its surrounding lands. Historians believe that in the case of Tyre, the agreement covered as many as 21 villages. In addition to these privileges, the Venetians were allowed to collect 300 gold bezant coins in taxation.

The small communities that the Italians built were tightly knit and governed by their own customs, laws and rules. When

Baldwin II returned from his captivity in 1125, he was horrified to discover how much power the Venetians had gained in his kingdom. The merchants were becoming a threat to Baldwin's royal authority, and he asked the doge to provide three knights for the city's defence in the future as a symbolic recognition of the king's power. Apart from

"Husbands strangled their wives by night when they displeased them. Women murdered their husbands with poison."

such minor changes, the treaty between Jerusalem and Venice lasted until the fall of the eastern kingdom in 1291.

After the Battle of the Horns of Hattin in 1187, the Crusaders lost much of their inland possessions, including Jerusalem, and had to make do with cities along the coasts.

Here, however, trade flourished as never before. The northern Italian merchant ships were the main arteries of an energetic flow of goods between the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Asia and Europe. Ships carried sugar cane and olive oil as well as luxury goods, such as precious stones, silk and spices.

The Italian merchants' port enclaves grew at a tremendous rate. Both Acre and

Tyre already had functioning customs houses in the 1180s. At Acre, they employed Arabic-speaking bookkeepers so that language difficulties did not disrupt trade with the Arab caravans. Trade in the city was so extensive that the merchants' goods had to be stowed in two-storey warehouses.

In the thirteenth century, Acre became the region's leading trade hub, a giant warehouse through which all the goods from east and west passed. The city also became the starting point for Christian traders' journeys into the eastern Islamic regions. They carried saffron from south-east Europe and fine cloth from Flanders – goods that were immensely popular in the Islamic capital of Baghdad.

The flow of money also prompted northern Italian bankers to settle and start conducting business in the Crusader States. Meanwhile, trading houses built their own castles and fortified towers – merchants from Venice, Genoa and Pisa were constantly competing to see who could construct the tallest building.

BISHOP WAS SCANDALISED

With the trade came a colourful jumble of Italian sailors, Arab caravan drivers and European traders that could leave even seasoned travellers breathless. Outlaws and criminals who had fled the authorities in their home countries roamed the streets. European prostitutes who "brought their silver anklets up to touch their golden earrings [and] made themselves targets for men's darts", as Saladin's secretary Imad al-Din put it, were sailed to the Holy Land in droves. Most ended up in the port cities of Acre and Tyre, where Italian sailors shamelessly cavorted with them. In fact,

Prompted by Venice's doge, Enrico Dandolo, the Crusaders sacked Constantinople in 1204.

TECHNOLOGY.....

CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

DAILY LIFE.....



Ships were built on assembly lines

Venice was Europe's leading trading and maritime nation thanks to extensive ship production at the Venetian Arsenal. This magnificent shipyard was founded during the Crusades, in around 1104. Different departments

each built their own part of the ship, each connected using a canal system reminiscent of twentieth-century assembly lines. The dockyard was Europe's largest workplace, and its 16,000 workers could build a vessel a day.



>>>>



looting its treasures for three days. Unfortunately, Zadar did not contain enough gold and valuables to settle the debt. The Crusaders still owed Venice money, and when the spring came, the doge spied a new opportunity.

Isaac II had recently been deposed as the emperor of the Byzantine Empire. He offered the Crusaders a large reward if they would help him exact revenge on the usurpers in Constantinople and return him to power. Strongly encouraged by the doge, who, as a former ambassador to the city, knew what riches were hidden behind its walls, the Crusaders struck. The coup was successful, and Constantinople was taken. However, Isaac reneged on his promise, and the Crusaders did not get the money they were promised. Instead, the furious troops plundered the ancient Christian city and installed their own emperor on the throne. The Crusaders finally had enough money to pay off Venice, which was richly rewarded

with large tracts of land that had previously belonged to the Byzantine Empire, including the islands of Corfu and Crete.

BASIS FOR EXPLORATION

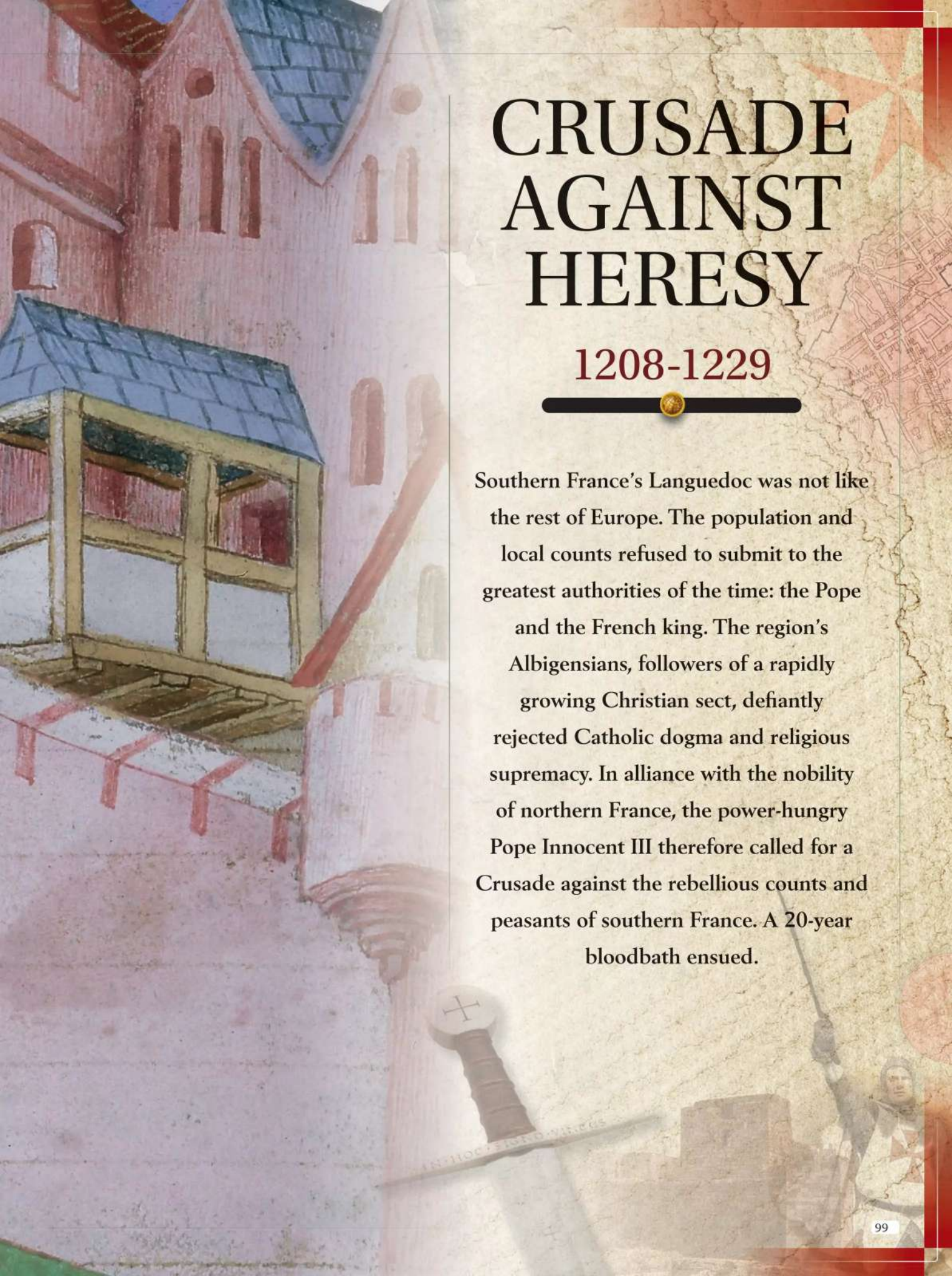
The acquisition of Crete enabled Venice to expand its territory, and eventually, the city dominated trade in the Mediterranean. The city's treasures overflowed with riches, and by the end of the thirteenth century, Venice was the wealthiest city in Europe, with no fewer than 36,000 sailors and 3,300 ships. The richest families ruled the city and built magnificent palaces. At the same time, they supported the greatest and most talented artists of the day, helping to lay the groundwork for Renaissance humanism and the scientific revolution.

The wealth and progress brought by trade with the Crusader States were so great that even the Crusader States' collapse in 1291 had no significant impact on the city state of Venice. It was only when

the Ottoman Empire surged forward during the fifteenth century, taking over the Byzantine Empire, that the fortunes of Venice and the other northern Italian cities started to decline.

Trade routes to the east were closed, leaving Europeans searching for an alternate sea route to the Far East. But northern Italy wasn't best placed to lead the race across the Atlantic to find a passage to India. Countries like Spain and Portugal had an obvious geographical advantage. But the Italians still helped make the voyages of discovery possible. In addition to providing many of the advances in seafaring and navigation necessary for such expeditions, Christopher Columbus himself was probably from Genoa. More crucially, the exploratory trips were financed by the bankers of that city. The daring voyages that opened up a New World and new opportunities for Europeans were paid for by banks set up to support the Crusades. ■





CRUSADE AGAINST HERESY

1208-1229

Southern France's Languedoc was not like the rest of Europe. The population and local counts refused to submit to the greatest authorities of the time: the Pope and the French king. The region's Albigensians, followers of a rapidly growing Christian sect, defiantly rejected Catholic dogma and religious supremacy. In alliance with the nobility of northern France, the power-hungry Pope Innocent III therefore called for a Crusade against the rebellious counts and peasants of southern France. A 20-year bloodbath ensued.

1208-29

1208 The murder of a papal envoy prompts the Pope to call for a Crusade against southern French heretics.

1209 A 10,000-strong crusading army sets out from Lyons.

1209 Crusaders capture, plunder and burn Béziers.

1215 Most of southern France is in Crusader hands.

1216 The Pope dies and the people of Languedoc revolt, led by the exiled Count Raymond.

1229 The king finally secures control of southern France.

1208 >>>

1209 >>>

1215 >>>

1216 >>>

1229 >>>

At sunrise on 14th January 1208, Pierre de Castelnau's life came to an abrupt end. As papal envoy, he was travelling through Languedoc in southern France to deal with the local priests, who were suspected of heresy. On the banks of the Rhône, he suddenly heard a horse galloping up behind him. Before the emissary could react, a lance pierced his back. Mortally wounded, the cleric tumbled off his mule and into the mud of the riverbank. The men in his entourage helped him up and sat with him as his life ebbed away.

At the news of his envoy's death, Pope Innocent III grasped the wick of a burning candle and extinguished the flame while uttering a curse. Shortly before his death, Pierre had met with Raymond, Count of Toulouse, whom the Pope suspected of condoning or even supporting the heresy that flourished among the count's southern French subjects. De Castelnau was supposed to have persuaded Raymond to lead his people towards proper Roman Catholic Christianity, but the count had not been receptive to the Pope's suggestion. On the contrary, Raymond had murdered Pierre. Innocent was convinced. As he had snuffed out the flame, so the

Pope wanted to snuff out Raymond and the heretics of southern France.

Innocent III decided to launch a Crusade – this time the enemy was errant Christians, not Muslims. But the Pope's attack on the heretics in Languedoc was to be just as brutal and ruthless as the previous Crusades to the Holy Land.

WILFULNESS PROVOKED POPE

The people of Languedoc must have been astonished at suddenly being proclaimed enemies of Christianity. For generations, the peasants of southern France had lived a quiet life in relative seclusion. France had been a loosely organised kingdom for centuries, where local princes and lords wielded great power and ruled largely as they pleased. Slowly, however, the country had evolved into a real kingdom, with a monarch whose power could trump that of the local rulers. At least, that was the situation in northern France. In the south, the counts were still very independent and many – such as Raymond of Toulouse – had strong links with the Spanish kingdom of Aragon. Languedoc in southern France particularly stood out from the rest of the country. Even the language was different; the word for yes – *oc*, as opposed to the Old

Albigensians called their ascetic religious leaders Perfects and their less righteous followers were named believers.

HERETICS DOMINATED LANGUEDOC

■ The Albigensians lived in southern France in the area between the Garonne and Rhône rivers. Their faith, also known as Catharism, was inspired by Bogomilism, which emerged in the Balkans in the tenth century. The Albigensians rejected the material world as evil, and the leaders impressed their followers with their ascetic lifestyle, which contrasted sharply with the corrupt emissaries of the Catholic Church.



French *oil* – had given the province its name, “language of *oc*”. The strict feudal hierarchy that prevailed in the rest of the country had also partially dissolved here. Raymond had to share his power with local rulers, called consuls, who had significant influence on decisions about the province's future.

Life revolved around small, close-knit communities in which everyone depended on each other and where land was a fundamental asset. Small plots of land often changed hands, were rented out or allocated according to rank and status. To avoid conflict, people lived by fixed rules of behaviour. *Cortezia* – respectful and considerate conduct – was the key word, and particularly worthy citizens, called good men, acted as mediators and advisors. Good men came from all classes, and women could be ‘good’ too – though only before marriage and in old age, when their time as mothers and wives was over.


In terms of religion, too, the people of Languedoc went their own way. Many professed the ideas of the Cathar Christian movement, which had spread to Western Europe from the Middle East and Eastern

Europe since the early eleventh century. By the mid-twelfth century, they had taken root in Languedoc.

The Cathars viewed the world as being divided into two distinct parts: the spiritual, which was good, and the physical, which was created by the Devil and therefore evil. They also rejected one of the central dogmas of the Roman Church, namely the physical resurrection of

The murder of the papal envoy Pierre de Castelnau was the Pope's excuse to launch the Crusade against southern French heretics.





The citizens of the southern French town of Lavaur fell victim to the wrath of the Crusaders and were killed as heretics.

“ The Pope’s attack on the heretics in Languedoc was just as brutal and ruthless as previous Crusades to the Holy Land ”



POPE INNOCENT III 1160-1216



EUROPE'S MOST POWERFUL MAN

Pope Innocent III was the most powerful Pope of the Middle Ages. During his 18 years as pontiff, he ruled the faithful with a heavy hand. He even decided the colours that could be used in Catholic churches. At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, he laid down a set of rules that came to dominate the Church's teachings for many years. These included the principle of transubstantiation – the belief that

bread and wine are literally transformed into the body and blood of Jesus. It was also decided that Jews and Muslims should wear special clothing, to distinguish them from Christians. Innocent liked to get involved in politics, usually on the side of powerful princes – as long as they agreed with the Church. Otherwise, they were in league with the Holy Roman Emperor Otto IV, among others.

Crushed the Albigensians – Launched the Third and Fourth Crusades against the Muslims

>>>> Christ. In their view, Jesus had appeared as an angel.

Even more damning, the Cathar religious leaders – ascetic vegetarians known as Perfects – criticised the Roman Church for its many corrupt priests. The Cathars had even established alternative dioceses, including Albi. Perhaps because of the Cathars' bishopric in Albi, the movement's southern French followers became known as Albigensians – misleading, as their religious centre was in Toulouse, Raymond's ruling city.

For several years, the Pope had sent a steady stream of monks to southern France to show the strays the correct path, but nothing had worked. Raymond refused to crack down on the alternative religious practices of his wayward peasants.

NOBILITY WELCOMED CRUSADE CALL For the Pope, the matter was serious; the Albigensians' rejection of the Catholic Church's fundamental principles was also a rejection of his power. In April 1207, Pope Innocent III took the grave step of expelling Count Raymond from the Catholic Church, threatening to make all the princes around him "rise against you as

an enemy of Christ". With the murder of Pierre de Castelnau ten months later, the Pope could make good on the threat.

"Forward then soldiers of Christ! Forward, brave recruits to the Christian army!" he impelled in the official call for a Crusade that emanated from Rome.

The words resonated to a degree not seen since the First Crusade.

15,000

people were killed by the Crusaders in Béziers, southern France.

People flocked in their thousands. Many, like the Pope, were disappointed with the direction the Crusades to the Holy Land had taken. The Catholic army's conquest of Orthodox Constantinople in 1204 and the apparent unification of the Greek and Roman churches had raised hopes for many that Jesus would soon return to Earth. But when news of the Christians' ravaging and sacking of Constantinople reached the Pope, hope turned to disappointment, and disappointment to rage. Now everyone was intent on purifying Christianity and thus preparing for Christ's resurrection.

Pious indignation, however, was far from the only reason for the great support the Crusade against the Albigensians received. For the royal nobles of northern France, the Pope's call for a Crusade against the heretics was a welcome opportunity to

attack the wilful southern French princes and counts like Raymond of Toulouse, and make them submit to the rest of France. In return for participating in the Crusade, the Pope promised not only absolution, but also that the land of the heretics would be open to the Crusaders, who could take what they wanted.

RAYMOND REPENTED NAKED

The prospect of losing his property frightened Raymond more than the Pope, God and Hell combined. At the thought of the ten thousand people the Pope had gathered, ready to set off from Lyon, the count promised penance and restitution. He handed over part of his property to the Church, and on 18th June – naked and full of remorse – he went to repent at the church of Saint-Gilles. There he listed every charge made against him, including the allegation that he had hired Jews to murder the papal envoy. After this confession, a representative of the Pope placed a cloak of coarse cloth around the count's bare shoulders as a sign of forgiveness.

Raymond was then led discreetly through the crypt and out of a side passage, hidden from the crowd that had assembled in front of the church. On his way out, he lingered for a moment by the tomb of the murdered Pierre de Castelnau. Four days

For years, Pope Innocent III tried to call the heretics of southern France back to the Church before throwing them out and pursuing them with a motley army of Crusaders made up of greedy northern French knights, churchmen, religious fanatics, bandits and thieves.



later, Raymond joined the Crusade against the Albigensians.

BÉZIERS FACED TERRIBLE CHOICE

The Crusaders left Lyon – a transport hub on the Rhône – at the end of June 1209. The army's huge load – siege equipment, tools and other heavy supplies – glided easily and unhindered down the river on barges, while nobles and priests on horseback followed along the banks, led by the papal envoy Arnaud Amalric. Behind the distinguished Crusaders followed a motley band of men and women, monks and artisans, prostitutes, soldiers and thieves – all bearing the sign of the cross on their chests. "God never made a cleric who could write them all down," wrote the troubadour William of Tudela about the 10,000-strong crowd.

The first stop for the Crusade was the Mediterranean town of Béziers. The Crusaders arrived on 21st July 1209 and were met by the town's bishop, who rode out to them on his mule. The bishop was sent back to his townspeople with shocking news – the Crusaders had given the town's devout Catholics a terrible choice: either they could eject the heretics from the city and stay themselves, or they could leave the city and allow the heretics stay. If they chose neither option, everyone would be "sliced apart".

Frightened, the townspeople gathered in the dim church, where they listened to the bishop's deliberations. He already had a list of heretics' names, so a deal with the Crusaders would be easy to follow through. Many lives would be saved that way, he argued resignedly.

A wave of indignation passed through the church until one citizen declared that he would "rather be drowned in the salt sea" than submit to the Crusaders' demands. The assembly agreed, and soon the citizens of Béziers were pouring through the streets to the city walls, where they defiantly lined up to defend the city.

Again the bishop rode through the city gate, this time to tell the Crusaders that the people of Béziers stood firm even though

"they knew very well that what awaited them was suffering, pain and death".

The bishop's prophecy was to come true. The citizens of Béziers had expected the invaders to give up their attempt to take the well-fortified town after besieging it for about 15 days – they were mistaken. The next day, a combination of greed and holy fury drove a group of young boys from the Crusaders to near madness. In a frenzy, they started running around the city wall, pulling out pieces of masonry and climbing up the fortifications. With fingers finding their way into every crack and crevice, they clambered towards the top, braving with deadly defiance the burning oil thrown down by the defenders on top of the wall.

BURNING CORPSES SET CITY ABLAZE

Finally, the youngsters managed to knock a hole in the wall and scramble through. Immediately, they opened the city gate to the rest of the Crusaders, then set upon people and property. With youthful exuberance, the boys rampaged through the

streets. Anything of value was stuffed into pockets and inside shirts, while the boys murdered indiscriminately. A group of people who had sought shelter in the church were beaten to death.

Adult Crusaders dressed in armour joined in the orgy of violence, and on street corners and squares the piles of corpses grew until the boys set them on fire – a fatal act, it would transpire.

The fire quickly spread to the houses. Church windows shattered in the heat, roofs collapsed, and knights' armour became blazing hot. Desperate, the Crusaders fled the city to save themselves.

When the fire finally died out and Béziers was left a smoking, blackened ruin, some of the more restrained knights dealt with the unruly boys, who were given a good thrashing.

Arnaud Amalric, the Pope's envoy, could not hide his delight, however: "These ribalds of ours spared no order of persons (whatever their rank, sex or age) and put to the sword almost 20,000 people ... the



Strong fortifications enabled the southern French heretics to resist the Crusaders for a long time. The castles of Châteaux de Lastours held out against the Pope's troops until 1229.



The outspoken Count Raymond of Toulouse – pictured holding a sword on his seal – played a key role in the Crusade against the Albigensians. Unwilling to submit to both the Pope in Rome and the French king, he helped provoke the Crusade, which he later joined in an attempt to retain power over his southern French kingdom. Later he turned against the Crusaders again.

The military leader of the Crusade, Simon de Montfort, submitted himself and his newly conquered southern French possessions to the French king Philip II in a formal homage.

whole city was despoiled and burnt, as divine vengeance raged marvellously," he proudly reported back to the Pope.

Amalric exaggerated the death toll, but the true number of victims, according to modern historians, was around 15,000, and the mercilessness and self-righteousness reflected in the ecclesiastical report was a frighteningly accurate expression of the Church's attitude. When the Crusaders asked Arnaud Amalric how they could distinguish between Catholics and heretics, the abbot reportedly replied, "Kill them! Truly, God will know his own."

The story may be anecdotal, but the sentiment was not unknown to the Church's scholars. The aim was to play it safe: "If it can be shown that some heretics are in a city, then all the inhabitants can be burnt," the high Dominican priest Johannes Teutonicus, declared a few years later, in an example from 1217.

CITIES SURRENDERED IN ADVANCE

Rumours of the Crusaders' brutal approach to Béziers quickly spread fear and terror, and towns and small communities willingly surrendered to the advancing army. Where citizens resisted, the Crusaders struck back with a heavy hand. When the strongly fortified town of Carcassonne, just north of the Pyrenees, fell on 15th August 1209, the Albigensians were expelled from the city naked.

Those who refused to profess their loyalty to the Pope and the Catholic Church were burned at the stake.

At times, the Crusaders were so zealous that it almost became too much even for Arnaud Amalric. When Minerva was conquered, the nobleman Robert de Mauvoisin thought that the offer to let converted heretics escape with their lives was too lenient.

"Do not fear. I believe very few will accept conversion," Amalric reassured him. And indeed, the nobleman had ample opportunity to quench his thirst for blood. The Crusaders found a few houses where some of the pampered "good men" and "good women" were staying. Along with about one hundred others – whose heresy was not proven – the apostates were burned at the stake.

Raymond of Toulouse, as part of the Crusade, helped to suppress the heretics he had previously protected, but the Crusade leaders did not trust the converted count. Most of them considered his change of heart to be a sham, done for political ends, and at a meeting in January 1211, they

confronted Raymond with their suspicions.

The military leadership of the Crusade had by then been taken over by Simon de Montfort, an ambitious nobleman who, after the latest conquests, had been made Viscount of Carcassonne and Béziers. Simon was more than sceptical about Raymond, and the meeting became one long recital of the sins of the southern French nobleman and his companions. The stories ranged from the ridiculous – such as that of Raymond Roger, one of Raymond's subjects, who allegedly sawed the arms and legs off a wooden figure of Christ to use them to grind pepper – to the grievous, like Raymond's unwillingness to do anything about the heretics in Languedoc.

Raymond sighed deeply as he listened to the tirade, but made no reply. Shortly after the meeting, Arnaud Amalric presented

him with a long list of demands.

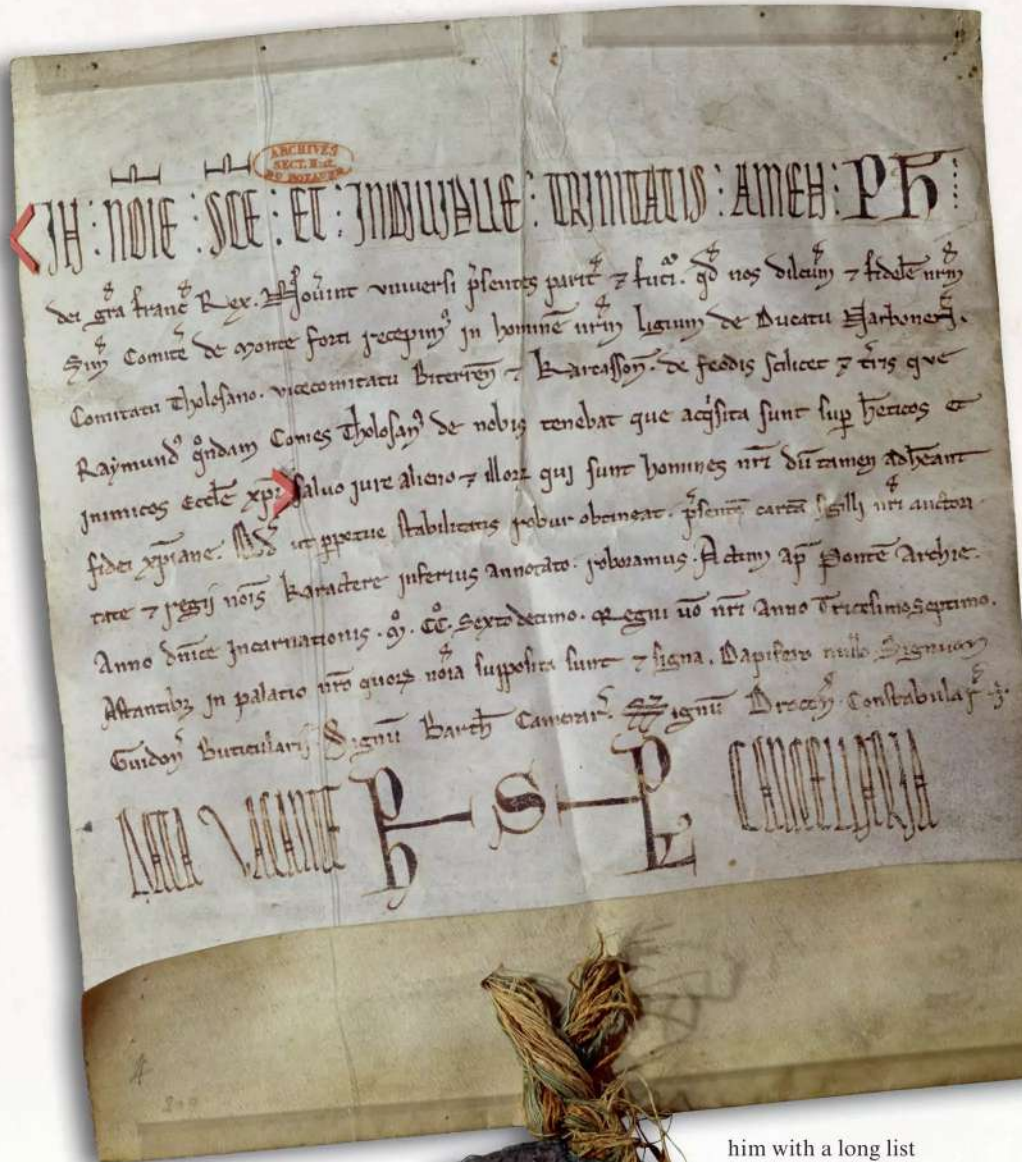
Among other things, the count was to throw the Jews out of Languedoc, eat meat only twice a week, dress in coarse cloth, demolish several of his castles, go to the River Jordan as a pilgrim and register as a Knight Templar.

Raymond burst out laughing, but when his eyes

met Amalric's grave gaze, he stiffened. Without a word, the count saddled up and rode away from the Crusaders' camp. On 6th February 1211, Raymond was expelled from the Church for the second time.

FORBIDDEN TO MARRY LOCALS

Now that the alliance with Raymond was over, the Crusader army could march forward in earnest. A course was set for the heart of Languedoc and Raymond's city,



Toulouse. Along the way, however, the Crusaders took a detour to the town of Lavaur, where they buried alive the widow of one of Raymond's sons and hanged her brother. Simon also seized the town's assets – wine, grain, horses and fine clothing – and used them to pay off the debt he had incurred by joining the Crusade.

Some 4,000 Crusaders reached the gate of Toulouse at the end of June, where Raymond ruled once again. In front of the army, the city's ramparts stretched for 1,300 metres and rose 30–50 metres high. After fierce fighting, they initially had to abandon their plan to take the city.

However, a large part of the Toulouse region was already in Crusader hands. At an ecclesiastical convention in November, Simon de Montfort was proclaimed a model Christian prince, and a series of decrees was passed to bring the wayward southern French into line. Heretics were to be driven out of the towns and their houses converted into churches. Anyone who allowed a heretic to live on his land was to be punished by losing "all his land for ever". And "on account of the danger to the land", noble southern French women were forbidden to marry local men without Simon's permission. They were, however, free to "marry Frenchmen if they wished".

Raymond hadn't given up on reclaiming his land, though. He sent for his brother-in-law, King Peter II of Aragon, who had distinguished himself by defeating the Muslims of Spain at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. On 12th September 1213, Raymond and Peter's forces clashed with Simon de Montfort's army at Muret near Toulouse – with a stinging defeat for Peter and Raymond. Peter lost his life, Raymond was driven out, and Toulouse fell to Simon.

POPE HELD TRIUMPHAL MEETING

The Crusade against the Albigensians looked like a huge success, and in 1215 the Pope summoned no fewer than 71 primates, 412 bishops, 802 abbots and thousands of other clergy to Rome to establish once and for all the Church's correct teachings and set out guidelines for dealing with heretics and dissenters. The city was in a festive mood, and the houses were draped with purple cloth, while the streets were lit by lanterns. At the Church meeting, which lasted several weeks, the Pope decided how heresy should be prevented and dealt with in future. As well as heretics themselves, "If a temporal lord, required and instructed by the Church, neglects to purify his lands of this heretical filth, he shall be bound with the bond of excommunication." Any new religious order was forbidden "lest too great diversity bring confusion into the Church".

Participants in the Albigensian Crusade were promised absolution on the same occasion: "Catholics who take the cross and gird themselves for the expulsion of heretics shall enjoy the same indulgence, and be

The experienced Crusader Simon de Montfort died in 1218 trying to retake Toulouse, which he had lost the year before.



CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

DAILY LIFE.....

Crusades inspired heresy

The Albigensians, whose tombstones (left) can still be seen in France, divided the world into the good, spiritual world and the evil, physical one. The faith was rooted in Gnosticism, suppressed by the Church for centuries. Paradoxically,

the Pope's Crusades probably helped to recirculate the ideas that had survived in small sects. Indeed, when Crusaders returned from the Holy Land in the twelfth century, they brought the Gnostics' ideas with them.

strengthened in the same holy privilege, as is granted to those who go to the Holy Land," the Pope declared. The bloodbath in southern France could continue.

Desperate, the deposed Raymond showed up in Rome, threw himself at the Pope's feet and begged for the return of his property. But Innocent declared that Simon de Montfort was now the rightful lord of Toulouse and the surrounding territories. While Simon, as newly crowned Count of Toulouse, received Raymond's former subjects and made them swear allegiance to him, Raymond left for Aragon.

RAYMOND'S LAST STRIKE

On 16th July 1216, Pope Innocent died suddenly, aged 55. With that, the Albigensian Crusade entered a new phase. Innocent's successor was also keen to drive out heretics, but he preferred political to military means. Rome's new attitude gave Raymond hope, and with help from Aragon, the count managed to retake Toulouse in 1217. The


following year, the indomitable southern French count even got the better of his arch-rival, Simon de Montfort, when the latter tried unsuccessfully to take the heavily fortified Toulouse once more.

A few years later, however, Raymond died, and in 1226 King Louis IX struck. He defeated Raymond's son, who was forced by a peace treaty in 1229 to bequeath his lands to the crown. The Albigensian Crusade was thus brought to an end, with French royalty as the ultimate victor. The central power had now secured control over the wayward people of southern France.

The heretical beliefs of the Albigensians could not be completely eradicated, but a new class of local princes in southern France, far more loyal to the Pope and the king, ensured that the heretics no longer enjoyed the kind of protection Raymond had provided. Slowly but surely, the Roman Church drove out the dangerous ideas of the Cathars and secured power over French religious life – even in Languedoc. ■







THE LAST BASTION

1203-1453

For almost nine hundred years, Constantinople was the capital of the Byzantine Empire and the centre of Christian power in the East. In 1203, an army of Crusaders in search of riches captured and ransacked the city, raping and murdering their fellow believers. With its strategic location, Constantinople had been a Christian bastion against the infidels, but the Crusader army's incursion was the beginning of the end. By the time Mehmed II's Ottoman army reached the city walls in 1453, the once-glorious metropolis was a shadow of its former self.

1203-1453

1203 A Crusader army is persuaded to attack Constantinople.



1203 Alexios Angelos, heir to the throne, is restored as emperor.

1204 The Crusaders ransack the city and install Count Baldwin as emperor.

1347 An outbreak of plague halves the city's population.

1453 Mehmed II's Ottoman forces take Constantinople.

1203 >>> 1203 >>> 1204 >>> 1347 >>> 1453 >>>

On 16th May 1204, Count Baldwin IX of Flanders was proclaimed Emperor Baldwin I of the Byzantine Empire in its capital Constantinople. He was crowned in the city's mighty cathedral, Hagia Sophia – continuing a tradition that stretched back seven hundred years. The new ruler donned a robe bearing the imperial coat of arms, the double-headed eagle, as he was blessed by bishops amid colourful mosaic friezes of the Virgin Mary.

Just a month earlier, the new emperor's forces had captured and plundered Constantinople. They had robbed churches of their treasures and raped and sacked their fellow Christians en route to holy war in Egypt. The Fourth Crusade never got beyond the Byzantine capital.

The Crusaders settled in the city after conquering Constantinople, and it marked the beginning of the end for the once-glorious Byzantine Empire, which in the sixth century AD had stretched from the Balkans in the north to Egypt in the south.

BYZANTINES ASKED ROME FOR HELP

The city had been proclaimed capital by the Roman Emperor Constantine in AD 324 and served as the centre for Eastern Roman power after the Roman Empire was split in two in 385. When Rome itself fell and the Western Empire collapsed in the late sixth century, the Byzantine Empire was left as sole heir to the mighty Roman Empire, as well as the undisputed pre-eminent power of the Christian world.

As Islam spread through the sixth and seventh centuries, Constantinople was

repeatedly attacked by Muslim forces, and in 1071 the city came close to falling into Muslim hands when a Turkish tribe called the Seljuks occupied much of the Byzantine Empire. In 1095, hoping to keep Muslim warriors away from the empire's borders and Constantinople's city walls, the young emperor General Alexios Komnenos reached out to the Catholic Church in the West, which had broken with the Eastern Byzantine (now Orthodox) Church in 1054. Pope Urban II accepted his plea and called for the First Crusade. From that moment on, Crusaders and Byzantines were linked as comrades-in-arms as well as religious rivals.

In AD 324, the Roman Emperor Constantine renamed the Greek city of Byzantium to Constantinople.

A FRAGILE ALLIANCE

Even as the first wave of Crusaders poured through the city gates, Emperor Alexios Komnenos had qualms. He feared that the Pope and the Catholic Church had ulterior motives for offering assistance and were in fact trying to seize control of the empire and the Orthodox Church. Many Christians were convinced that the unification of the two churches was a prerequisite for Christ's return. At the same time, it was no secret that the Pope saw the Crusades as an opportunity to increase the influence of the Catholic Church on the Christian churches in Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine.

At times, relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Western Crusaders were peaceful. For example, Emperor Manuel Komnenos (1143-1180) used Catholic administrators in his government and was also on good terms with the French King Louis VII. They celebrated Christmas together in 1147, when the king visited



The Crusaders' Venetian entourage brought riches from their home to Constantinople, including this drinking cup of silver gilt, onyx and pearls.

Constantinople during the Second Crusade. After the death of Emperor Manuel Komnenos, relations between East and West cooled again, and during the Third Crusade, the simmering conflict between the two Christian churches almost broke out into open warfare when a Crusader army, under the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, clashed with the Byzantines and threatened to take the city.

CRUSADERS BOUGHT WITH SILVER

The Fourth Crusade would ultimately demonstrate that the Crusaders' own interests far outweighed the fragile alliance between the two churches. In the winter of 1203, they found themselves deeply in debt to the Venetians, who had provided them with ships and provisions for their journey. They also lacked the manpower to continue the Crusade against Egypt. Hungry and exhausted, the Crusaders were stranded at the Hungarian town of Zadar, on the Adriatic coast in present-day Croatia, when they received a remarkable offer.

The official leader of the Crusade, Boniface Marquis of Montferrat, had visited the German King Philip of Swabia. Here he met Alexios Angelos, son of the former Byzantine Emperor Isaac II, who had been deposed in 1195 by his own brother, Alexios III. Alexios had gouged out Isaac's eyes and imprisoned him while taking his place as emperor. Isaac II's heir, Alexios Angelos, living in exile with King Philip, was desperate to free his father and regain the throne. To this end, he made an offer to the stranded Crusaders:

TECHNOLOGY.....

CULTURE.....

ECONOMY.....

DAILY LIFE.....

Sultan attacked with giant cannon

At the fall of Constantinople in 1453, cannons were still a new sight on the battlefield. When Sultan Mehmed II arrived in the city, his army was equipped with a full nine-metre-long monster of a cannon, capable of sending 600-kilogram

marble cannonballs 1,600 metres away. However, the weapon proved almost useless in battle. Not only did it take 60 oxen and 400 men to pull the 19-tonne weapon, but Mehmed II's soldiers also spent two hours loading it.



200,000 silver marks, provisions for the entire army, and 10,000 men, 500 knights and 20 galleys for the expedition to Egypt. In return for his generous donation, the Crusaders would take Constantinople and overthrow Alexios III.

Boniface was hugely tempted. The 200,000 silver marks would settle the Crusaders' debts once and for all, while the food and men could carry the Crusade to its target, Egypt. Encouraged, he travelled to Zadar, where the Crusaders had camped for the winter, to present Alexios Angelos's proposal to the army.

FEAR OF POPE'S CONDEMNATION

Alexios Angelos's offer caused mutiny among the Crusaders. Pope Innocent III had already strongly condemned their attack on the Christian city of Zadar.

"The Devil ... caused you to make war against your brothers and to unfurl your battle standards initially against people of the Faith," Innocent thundered in his letter

to the commanders of the Crusader army, threatening to expel them from the Catholic Church. No one doubted, therefore, that an attack on Constantinople would see the Holy Father in Rome unleash an even stronger fury on the Crusaders.

"It would mean marching against Christians. They [the Crusaders] had not left their homes to do any such thing," Abbot Guy of Vaux-Cernay argued during a meeting of the Crusade's leaders. At the same time, rumours were spreading through the Crusader camp that the dethroned Isaac was not serving the cause of the cross. During the Third Crusade, he had made a deal with the Muslim commander Saladin and denied the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick

Barbarossa access to Constantinople. However, the Fourth Crusade was doomed to be stranded on the Adriatic coast if they did not take up the offer. That settled the matter. Boniface accepted Alexios Angelos's proposal, and the Crusader army headed towards the Byzantine capital.

Along the way, the knights stopped at Corfu to prepare for the operation. The island was part of the Byzantine Empire, and when the inhabitants sensed that the Crusaders had nefarious designs, they

When the Crusaders captured Constantinople in 1204, Baldwin, leader of the Crusader army, had himself crowned emperor.





“The Byzantines protected the Golden Horn with an iron chain”

gave them a cool welcome. The city of Corfu refused to open its gates to Alexios Angelos, instead raining down stones on the Crusaders' ships. The Crusader army fled Corfu and continued towards Constantinople, stopping at several Byzantine islands en route, where it pillaged the locals' produce.

QUEEN OF CITIES

In late June, with renewed vigour, the Crusader army finally had the Bosphorus Strait in its sights and docked on the opposite shore, just a few kilometres from the Byzantine capital. From here, the Crusaders could see the spectacular city, strategically protected by water on three sides. On the landward side, a five-kilometre-long fortification rose up, decorated with triumphal mosaics and equipped with as many as 96 defensive towers.

“I can assure you that all those who had never seen Constantinople before gazed very intently upon the city, having never imagined there could be so fine a place in all the world,” wrote the Crusader Geoffrey of Villehardouin.

Behind the city walls, the Crusader army could see the towers of palaces, magnificent Roman-style buildings and high churches. The Queen of Cities, as its inhabitants dubbed the metropolis, was home to almost 400,000 people at the time – by comparison, European cities such as Paris or Venice had only 60,000 inhabitants. Constantinople was a bustling trading centre, with numerous cargo ships and trade caravans arriving and departing with goods from Europe in the West and Asia Minor in the East.

On 2nd July 1203, the Crusaders received an envoy from Emperor Alexios III. He offered Count Boniface of Montferrat money and provisions if only the Crusader army would sail quickly on to Egypt. The envoy's offer also threatened that the emperor would not spare them if they declined. But the Crusaders refused to recognise the emperor's authority and

instead sent the young Alexios Angelos, flanked by ten galleys, to Constantinople to urge the citizens gathered on the city walls to restore the young heir to the throne. But the response was lukewarm at best, and the prince quickly withdrew.

THE CRUSADERS ATTACKED

The Crusaders now moved on to the next step in their plan of attack. On 5th July, accompanied by trumpets, drums and tabors, they boarded the transport ships.

The armour of the horses and the sharpened weapons glittered on the sea as the ships shot across the strait. In Constantinople, its citizens gathered in terror on rooftops to keep watch on the massive enemy fleet. From there, it must have looked as if “the whole sea was covered with ships”, according to Crusader Robert de Clari.

When the transport ships docked, the knights were ready on their horses and galloped

straight across a series of gangways on to the beach. After them followed archers and hordes of foot soldiers. The sight of the warlike Crusader army caused Emperor Alexios III and his forces, who had taken up positions along the Bosphorus Strait, to tuck their tails between their legs and flee back to the protection of the city walls.

The Crusaders' plan was to advance to the Golden Horn estuary north of the city, which served as a harbour and was where the fortifications against the city were easier to break through. The Byzantines protected the Golden Horn with an iron chain that prevented ships from passing through the entrance. Eventually, after a 12-day siege, the crew of the Crusaders' largest ship, the *Eagle*, managed to break the massive chain. Led by the ageing and almost blind Doge of Venice, Dandolo, they now made their way into the city, and the Doge personally planted a banner of Venice's patron saint, St Mark, symbolised by a lion, on Constantinople's soil. The Crusaders made sure to sink as much of the Byzantine fleet as possible in the Golden Horn before turning towards the city.

Alexios III hastily packed gold and silver from the treasury and then fled the

capital. His subjects pulled the old, blind emperor Isaac out of the dungeon and put him on the throne to avoid the punishment of the Crusaders. He ruled with his son Alexios Angelos, now titled Alexios IV.

The siege ended, but the coronation of the new emperor in Hagia Sophia did not bring peace to the city. In the chaos after the conquest and with unrest in several places across his vast empire, Alexios IV had neither the money nor the desire to fulfil his part of the bargain with the Crusaders, which was to send them on their way with provisions and 200,000 silver marks as promised. He amicably asked them to stay in Constantinople for another six months until he felt secure on the throne. The Crusaders and their Venetian allies had no choice but to camp outside the city.

After less than six months, the two emperors suffered a violent popular uprising that left them barricaded inside a palace chamber. From there, they asked one of their trusted men, the experienced court usher Alexios Doukas, to call on the Crusader army for help. But Doukas took advantage of the emperors' trust to make his way to their hiding place in the palace, where he strangled Alexios IV. He threw the old emperor Isaac back into the dungeon, where he quickly died from the ordeal. Doukas now proclaimed himself emperor under the name Alexios V.

CRUSADER ARMY WENT CRAZY

Anger raged across the Crusader army, which had now finally lost any chance of a share in Constantinople's riches. A papal blessing, invented for the occasion, stated that Christians had the right to punish other Christians if they tried to prevent a crusade, and so the Crusaders set upon the city. Alexios V desperately set his subjects to blocking up the city gates. But the Crusaders aimed their catapults at Constantinople, mounted ladders on the city walls and made their way over the fortifications. Despite prohibitions against preying on women or



Emperor Alexios III as depicted on Byzantine coins.

EYEWITNESS

Nikolas Mesarites / 1204

THE CRUSADERS' ATTACK ON CONSTANTINOPLE



“They slaughtered the new-born, killed prudent [matrons], stripped elder women, and outraged old ladies. They tortured the monks, they hit them with their fists and kicked their bellies,

thrashing and rending their reverend bodies with whips. Mortal blood was spilled on the holy altars, and on each, in place of the Lamb of God sacrificed for the salvation of the universe, many were dragged like sheep and beheaded, and on the holy tombs, the wretched slew the innocent.”

The Crusaders spared neither women nor Church officials when they captured Constantinople and ransacked the city in 1204.



THE LAST CRUSADES

The Crusaders' attacks on Constantinople in 1203 and 1204 were the beginning of the Crusades' downfall. The following expeditions to the Holy Land saw the Crusaders suffer defeat after defeat, while the Muslim powers grew larger and stronger. The Egyptians, in particular, proved to be fierce opponents. In 1244, in just two days, their army crushed Christian forces

at La Forbie in Gaza. At the same time, interest in crusading waned in Europe. Throughout the Middle Ages, kings, princes and princesses consolidated their grip on power and needed their subjects to defend their territories locally. With the spread of Protestantism in the sixteenth century, the Pope's authority was also weakened and his call to fight the infidels

watched as Mehmed II's army marched around the city. The sultan, keen to avoid an attack, first tried to buy his way into power by offering the inhabitants money and gifts, but the emperor could not be tempted. For the last time, the sultan's messenger arrived at the gate with an offer: he would spare the citizens if Emperor Constantine would surrender.

But the emperor refused, having sworn that he would defend Constantinople to the last drop of blood. Shortly after, the dull drone of a previously unseen weapon sounded. A cannon almost nine metres long, with a calibre of more than half a metre, sent its deadly payload – a 600-kilogram marble ball – crashing into the walls of the Christian city, opening deep fissures. Panicked, the inhabitants set about repairing the walls.

They had ample time to do so, however, because it took two hours to load the giant cannon. The Ottomans also tried to place a siege tower against the thick city walls, but a small force from Constantinople sneaked out and set fire to it.

OMINOUS LUNAR ECLIPSE

Mehmed II launched a decisive attack just as his forces were losing patience after five months of siege. As before, the people of Constantinople stretched a thick iron chain across the entrance to the Golden Horn

>>>> plundering churches, knights, nobles and common foot soldiers vied for gold, silver and relics.

"They snatched the precious reliquaries, thrust into their bosoms the ornaments which these contained, and used the broken remnants for pans and drinking cups," wrote contemporary Byzantine historian Niketas Choniates. The Crusaders stripped Hagia Sophia of valuables and carried them away on horses and mules, which were taken right into the sanctuary. No one was spared during the three days of murder, pillage and rape that followed.

Even the Crusaders acknowledged that the attack on the Byzantine capital was violent. According to the Crusader Geoffrey de Villehardouin, the Crusader army in Constantinople took more loot than ever before. Their conquest of the city ended only once they'd installed the Crusader Count Baldwin of Flanders as emperor in a lavish ceremony in Hagia Sophia cathedral.

DECLINE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

The new superpower renamed the Byzantine Empire *Imperium Romaniae* (the Latin Empire) and divided the territory between Crusaders and Venetians. The Crusaders' share was divided into 600 lots for the knights, who would then form the military, political and economic backbone of the new empire. But the knights could not control the new territories. The rulers of the former Byzantine neighbouring empires quickly went on the attack, and in 1261, warriors from Nicaea managed to wrest Constantinople from the Crusaders.

Barely a century later, in 1347, a plague outbreak halved the city's population and, according to some historians, by the mid-fifteenth century, Constantinople was inhabited by just 50,000 people. The once-magnificent mansions and palaces stood empty, and the streets were deserted.

Constantinople was left a shadow of its former self as Ottoman forces turned their sights on the city. The Ottomans were heirs

to the Seljuks, who grew into a major power in the Balkans and Asia Minor during the decline of the Byzantine Empire in the fourteenth century. Now they wanted to possess the city, which controlled the passage between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

"There is only one thing I want. Give me Constantinople," said Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, who came to power in 1432.

MEHMED II TOOK THE CITY

In 1453, with an entourage of 80,000 troops, he marched on the city and in less than four

months had built the Rumelihisari fortress, with walls more than seven metres thick, on the opposite side of the Bosphorus Strait.

The sultan quickly made use of the fortress alongside his mighty navy to seize control of the city's shipping routes to stifle trade.

Desperate, Constantinople's Emperor Constantine grabbed his only lifeline. He humbly asked Pope Nicholas V for help, and with the horrifying news of Muslim soldiers outside the gates of Constantinople – and thus Europe – the Pope pledged to send warriors to the rescue. The promises remained empty – except for a 700-strong unit from Genoa, Emperor Constantine secured no support from the rest of Europe, which was exhausted by the plague and a bloody war between France and England. The age of the Crusades was over.

On 6th April 1453, the citizens of Constantinople

7,000
men tried
to defend
Constantinople
against 80,000
Ottoman
soldiers.

inlet. But under cover of darkness, the sultan had his ships hauled ashore and rolled on logs over the ridge at Galata, so he could launch them directly into the Golden Horn. The Ottomans had cleared a section of the city wall that had previously been protected by the harbour wall.

"Never, never, will I leave you. I am resolved to die here with you," an emotional and desperate Constantine declared to the city's clergy and courtiers when he saw the ships. In addition to the deadly giant cannon with which Mehmed II had opened the battle, the sultan also directed 60 smaller cannons, which he'd had made in improvised cannon foundries

at Constantinople. The guns boomed as the city's defences crumbled stone by stone.

The mood among the Byzantines was sombre. According to an old myth, Constantinople would last as long as the moon could be seen in the sky. So, when the moon disappeared from view in a three-hour eclipse on 24th May, the inhabitants knew its time had come. At dawn four days later, after fierce attacks, the Ottomans were able to take the city. Emperor Constantine, who had kept his word and defended the city,

was never found, but later a body turned up near Hagia Sophia cathedral. The head had been chopped off the body, but the purple

boots adorned with double-headed eagles convinced the locals that the dead man must be Constantine.

The victorious Mehmed II entered the city and immediately set course for Hagia Sophia. To the sound of chanted proclamations to the greatness of Allah, he declared the church a mosque. Christianity's last bastion in the East had fallen. ■



In Constantinople's artisan quarter, the city's potters made oil lamps.

Sultan Mehmed II's troops attacked Constantinople in 1453 with cannons cast in improvised foundries near the battlefield.







ON GOD'S SIDE

With swords raised and religious convictions inflamed, Crusaders went to war. They were willing to die for their god, who through the Pope had blessed their Crusade. Their sins would be forgiven, and in their eyes God welcomed the fight against the Muslims. The centre of the battle was Jerusalem, the Holy City for Christians, Jews and Muslims alike. Here lay important shrines for all three religions: the Wailing Wall, the remains of the ancient temple for Jews, the al-Aqsa Mosque for Muslims and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for Christians.



Orthodox Judaism: Two Jewish men with sidelocks look at the al-Aqsa Mosque, located right next to the Wailing Wall. Orthodox Jews must abide by the laws and rules that have been written down since the origins of Judaism.



The Torah: The first five books of the Bible contain the Torah. It is a manual that includes the laws and 613 commandments that define Jewish life.

Exodus from Egypt: Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.



Abraham: Abraham was the first of the Hebrew patriarchs. The Jews consider him, his son Isaac and Isaac's son Jacob as their ancestors.



JUDAISM

■ Around 2000 BC, God ordered Abraham to migrate to a “promised land”, Canaan, where he would be the father of “the chosen people” of Israel. According to the Bible, in 957 BC, King Solomon built the First Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where al-Aqsa Mosque now stands. Romans destroyed the Second Temple in AD 70. The remains are known today as the Wailing Wall, one of Judaism’s holiest sites.



Menorah: According to Exodus, God handed Moses the design for the seven-branched candlestick on Mount Sinai.



The Wailing Wall: The remains of the wall that surrounded the Jewish Second Temple are where Jews mourn the loss of two sacred temples that were built as God’s primary dwelling place on Earth.



RITUALS Passover is the most important Jewish holiday. Unleavened bread and bitter herbs are eaten.



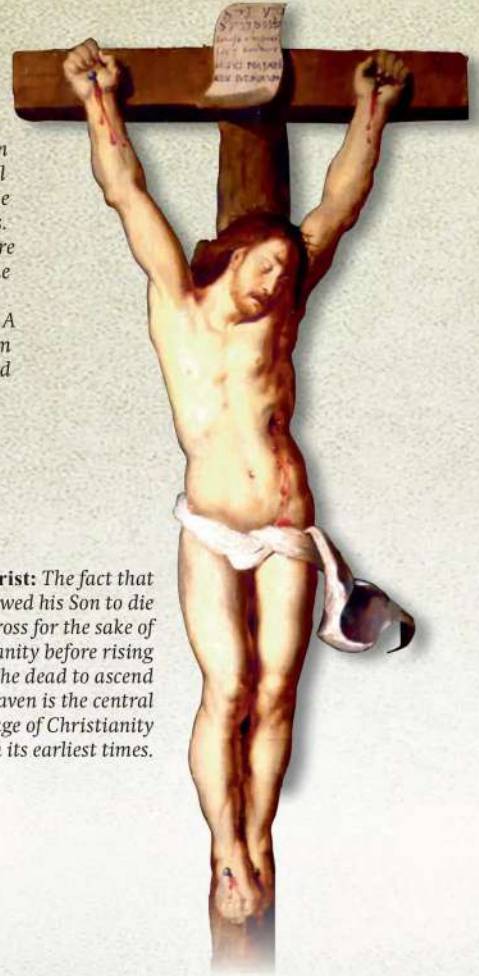
On Shabbat, the Jews’ weekly day of rest, they traditionally eat challah. It is a sweet bread baked without butter or milk.



At the Passover meal, called Seder, Jews read the Haggadah, which tells of the Israelites’ escape from Egypt.



Mappa Mundi: Jerusalem was both the geographical and spiritual centre of the world in the Middle Ages. The East and Paradise are therefore at the top of the picture, which dates from around AD 1260. A pilgrimage to Jerusalem was both a physical and spiritual journey.



Jesus Christ: The fact that God allowed his Son to die on the cross for the sake of humanity before rising from the dead to ascend into Heaven is the central message of Christianity from its earliest times.



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre: Christians believe that the site is at Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified, as well as the place where he was buried and resurrected. Six different Christian denominations share the church today.



Hell: According to the Bible, the archangel Satan declared war on God, who cast him out of Heaven. Satan established his own evil domain, Hell, a place of eternal fire, pain and torture.



Virgin Mary: Jesus was born of Mary in Bethlehem. She was a virgin and, as the mother of the Son of God, represents the link between the human and spiritual worlds. Mary is considered to be completely without sin.

CHRISTIANITY

■ Christianity sees itself as the new covenant between humans and God, beginning with the life and death of Jesus Christ. Only Christ can save humanity from sin. Christians acknowledge that he was a Jew and believe that he is the Son of God: one person who is both human and divine. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is built on the place where tradition says Christ was buried, and has been the main pilgrimage site for Christians for the past 2,000 years.



The Bible: The holy tome comprises 60 books written over several centuries. The Old Testament mainly tells the story of the Jews, while the New Testament is about the life and death of Christ.



The Holy Spear: A Roman soldier stabbed Christ in the side with a lance to make sure he had died on the cross. Blood and water came out of the wound – symbols of his humanity (the blood) and divinity (the water).



TRINITY The Trinity is the concept of one God being three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Father, God, is the almighty creator of the universe, while the Son is Christ, God in human form.

The Holy Spirit is God's power on Earth and is often illustrated as a dove hovering over it.



Al-Aqsa Mosque: The archangel Gabriel led Muhammad to the riding beast Buraq, who carried him to the Temple Mount and the al-Aqsa (Farthest) Mosque in Jerusalem. Here he made a pilgrimage to Heaven.



Ramadan: During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims often break their fast after sunset with a few dates and some water.



CUSTOMS

Veils and loose clothing that conceal the face and body are traditional Muslim female dress.

Every year, over two million pilgrims visit the Kaaba in Mecca to perform hadj, pilgrimage.

Many Muslims use a prayer mat facing Mecca when observing the five daily prayers.



Quran: Gabriel revealed the Quran to Muhammad, paragraph by paragraph. For Muslims, the Quran completes the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, as it is God's final revelation to mankind.



Eid al-Fitr: Muslims mark the end of Ramadan with a celebration of the cessation of fasting, Eid al-Fitr. The festivities can be marked with a procession of horsemen and banners.



ISLAM

■ Muhammad became the Prophet of Islam in AD 610 when the Archangel Gabriel revealed the Quran to him. He preached faith in one god, Allah, at a time when many were polytheists. In 638, the Muslims conquered Jerusalem, for them the third holiest city after Mecca and Medina. They maintained control for over 400 years. Today, the Temple Mount is home to both the holy al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, the cornerstone of Muhammad's ascension.



Supplications: Allah is also called al-Asma al-Husna, which means God's Most Beautiful Names. Prayer beads can be used to recite the 99 beautiful names or to remember other prayers.

◀ **Muhammad:** The archangel Gabriel conveyed Allah's revelations to Muhammad and often listened to him recite them.

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Pope called for Holy War

On 27th November 1095, Pope Urban II set in motion a chain of events that would change Europe and the Middle East for years to come. In a fiery speech in the French town of Clermont, he talked of Muslims attacking Christians in Byzantium and called for war against the infidels, promising absolution to any who joined the Holy Crusade. Within a year, 100,000 men-at-arms were ready for battle. In 1099, the first Christian armies reached Jerusalem and captured the city in a merciless massacre. News of the Crusaders' brutality quickly spread throughout the Muslim world, but with no unified defence, the kingdoms were powerless to resist. It was a hundred years before the mighty Saladin assembled an army capable of pushing back the Christian invaders.

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